

STATION

...the hardest hitting PlayStation in the world!

THIS MONTH'S
DEMOS:

METAL GEAR SOLID • TOMB RAIDER
VIRTUAL LARA • ACTUA SOCCER
ACTUA GOLF 3 • ACTUA TENNIS



EXCLUSIVE DEMO
& PAL CODE!

METAL GEAR SOLID

1999's biggest game is all ours! We test
the PAL code, you enjoy the rolling demo.

PLAYED AND RATED:

CRASH BANDICOOT: WARPED

TOCA 2

COLONY WARS: VENGEANCE

MUSIC

ACTUA GOLF 3

LIBERO GRANDE

COOL BOARDERS 3

PYSBADEK

NFL BLITZ

SMALL SOLDIERS

and much more



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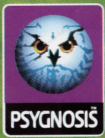
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Dec 1998
Volume 1 Issue 3



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UK EXCLUSIVE! METAL GEAR SOLID DEMO NO 3

STATION

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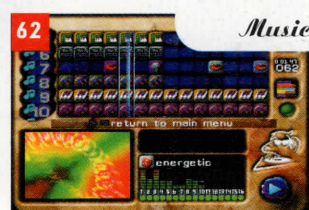
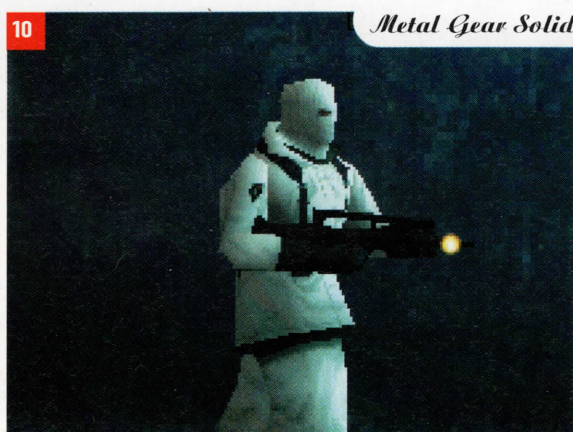
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 COOL BOARDERS 3
 PYSBADEK
 NFL BLITZ
 SMALL SOLDIERS
 and much more

£4.95
 Dec 1998
 Return to Stock 1



PLAYED AND RATED

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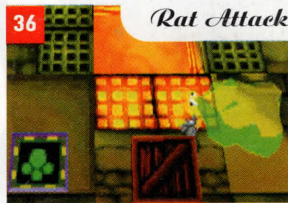
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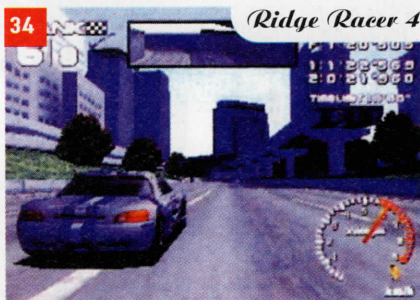
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This month's best-selling games and the best places to buy them.

All I want for Christmas...

CHRISTMAS IS A TIME OF GIVING. STATION readers are on the receiving end this year though, when you look at the line-up we've procured for the third and best ever STATION demo disc.

For starters there's the exclusive UK premiere of *Metal Gear Solid*, the demo everybody wanted! There's also the first chance to meet Lara Croft in our exclusive Virtual Lara demo. This is the first time that this technology has been seen outside of the E3 show in Atlanta. Plus we're bringing you exclusive playable demo's of the latest games in the Actua range, including the immense football simulation - *Actua Soccer 3*.

By the way, the pumping tune you can hear in the background on the menu screen was created using the excellent Codemaster's game/program, *Music*.

What more could you want for Christmas?

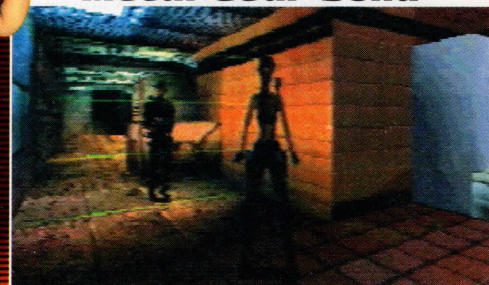
Your two front teeth?...



STATION ³



Metal Gear Solid



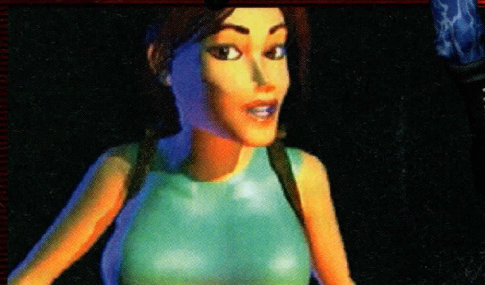
Tomb Raider III



Actua Soccer 3



Actua Golf 3



Virtual Lara



Actua Tennis

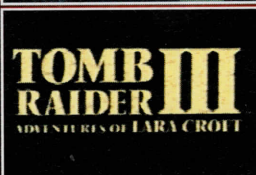


DISC BREAKDOWN



Metal Gear Solid ^{EXCLUSIVE!}

This is it, the one you've all been waiting for and bombarding us with phone calls for. We couldn't ignore the amount of people that have asked to see *Metal Gear Solid* in the flesh, so here after months of preparation is the first exclusive UK look at what could possibly be the best game ever. Our demo shows over seven minutes of footage taken directly from the UK version of the game, so if you want anything else this Christmas, you're just being greedy.



Tomb Raider III: Lara's Adventures

After bringing you the first rolling demo of *Tomb Raider III* with Station 01, we're now ready to unleash the playable demo of one of the leading contenders for the number one spot this Christmas. If you need any more proof that Lara's third adventure is undoubtedly her most accomplished yet, here it is.



Actua Soccer 3 ^{EXCLUSIVE!}

You read last month's exclusive review, now play this month's exclusive demo. Take charge of either Man Utd. or Arsenal in STATION's very own *Actua Soccer 3* FA Cup Final Replay. *Actua Soccer 3* may have some tough competition this Christmas, but we're sure you'll agree after playing this demo, that it's at least up there with the best of them.



Actua Golf 3 ^{EXCLUSIVE!}

Actua Golf 3 is quite possibly the best golfing simulation to ever tee off on the PlayStation and we've secured this exclusive demo so that you can see for yourself why it's so good. You'll need an analogue pad to get the most out of it though, but don't worry this hole from the Matchplay round is still very playable with a digital pad.



Actua Tennis ^{EXCLUSIVE!}

Whipped cream and strawberries, rain and Sir Cliff don't make an appearance on *Actua Tennis*. Instead you get the real excitement of one of the most skilful sports in the world. Our exclusive demo gives you a time limited match to smash fluffy green balls at, and if you're not rushing out to your local indoor tennis court after playing this, you're probably a cricket fan. Or something.



Virtual Lara ^{EXCLUSIVE!}

Your chance to meet Lara is no further away than the black disc you found on the front of this magazine. That's right, Lara has taken time out of her busy schedule to chat exclusively to STATION readers about love, life and the universe. Well not actually, but she will tell you everything you need to know about her new game. Don't go all nervous when you meet her though.



Turn to page 128 to find out how to get the most out of your exclusive cover CD.



Let the Legend begin!

3D rendered Action Adventure

25 Levels in 5 huge environments

Hidden bonus levels

Co-operative 2 player mode

Special moves and hidden combo moves



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COMING ON STRONG!

As this record-breaking issue of STATION goes on sale we are only four weeks away from Christmas '98. Isn't it amazing that when so many 'experts' proclaimed that the PlayStation would be on its last legs by now, our beloved grey Sony box just seems to keep going from strength to strength. This magazine is proof irrefutable of this fact. Here we are on Issue 3, with our readership growing monthly, and now printing over 400,000 copies; nearly double the number we printed for Issue 1. If the PlayStation's popularity is falling, I have to admit that I've seen no real evidence of it yet and I don't expect that this Christmas will prove any different to those of recent years, with Santa once again plopping more 'stations through the chimneys of UK homes than any other console. Great, that means more readers for us and continued software support for our console of choice. Cheers fat bloke!

Next Month

Issue 4 will see the introduction of of a letters page, in acknowledgement of the massive feedback we have been receiving from yourselves over the past few months, so if you have a point that you feel needs making, it doesn't have to be about the magazine, STATION is the perfect opportunity for you to have a nationwide soapbox. And don't worry about us putting belittling, sarcastic comments at the end of your letters. We won't be doing that. You have your say and we'll let the other readers decide if any reply is necessary.

Anticipation Ratings Explained

I also want to take this opportunity to explain the 'Anticipation Ratings' that appear on all of our Preview pages. It doesn't seem to be something that bothers you the readers particularly, but software companies are struggling to get their heads around them. These ratings are not reflective of the quality of the game, or how well we think it will rate at Review stage. They are however, indications of what we consider the consumer awareness and desire for the product is at the time of Preview. This is based on market knowledge of title, hype created, quality of code and pulling power of any license connected to the game. A game could be badly anticipated but still be a great game. The same works in reverse of course. Got it?

Finally, there is no way that I could leave this Editorial page without mentioning what is without a doubt our strongest Demo CD to date: *Metal Gear Solid* - Exclusive, *Actua Soccer 3* - Exclusive, *Virtual Lara* - Exclusive... And they're all yours! Our own little Christmas thank you to you for purchasing this magazine.

Have a great festive season, tell your friends about STATION and we'll see you again on December 31st.

Dave Perry – Gutter Superstar △○×□

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TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

METAL GEAR S O L I D

The computer games world has now come of age. And like any multi-million pound industry, hype plays a large part in the build-up to the release of a new game. Metal Gear Solid is possibly the biggest release ever and has occupied front page space for almost a year now, but really, is ANY game that good? Well we know, we've played the UK PAL version.

Metal Gear Solid

Publisher: Konami

Developer: In-house

Release Date: Feb '99

Game Type: Gobsmaacking

PAL Percentage Complete **80%**

Character Bios

Metal Gear Solid relies heavily on the strength of it's characters to push the plot to the forefront. You'll find though, that not all of the characters in the story are as straightforward as they seem. Many have hidden agendas or important secrets that will be discovered at some point. After all, what would a story of espionage be without a web of deceit?



Ninja

A mysterious entity that is shrouded in mystery for most of the game. Who does he fight for and why does he challenge Snake? These questions will be answered, only when you play Metal Gear Solid for yourself. 'Cause we're not giving the game away.



TACTICAL ESP METAL S O L I D

THEY SAY that you should never believe the hype. It's a useful rule that THEY SAY will stand you in good stead in years to come. But after completely dissecting the first ever PAL copy of Konami's stupendous hype monster Metal Gear Solid, WE'D SAY that THEY are stupid not to listen to what everyone is saying, and believe everything.

In fact we've just joined the hype cult, and we have faith in everything we've ever seen or been told about Metal Gear Solid. Why? Well because we've seen first hand the wonders that Metal Gear Solid has in store in it's UK PAL rendition. Unlike others, we have not reviewed an incomprehensible Japanese version that certain publications have given ninety plus marks to. How do you mark a game in a foreign language that is so easy that you can complete the whole thing in a day? You don't!

That's why we've moved heaven and earth to ensure that we got the first play of the real Metal Gear Solid. That's the one that will be

released in this country. NOT the far too easy Japanese version.

Feel privileged as a STATION reader then, that the next ten pages are dedicated to giving you the best, and only guide to the phenomenon that is, Metal Gear Solid and its hero, Solid Snake.

And what we have to say even before you read the following is...

Do believe the hype - this is bigger than Jesus. (...or even Lara.)

As the eponymous hero of this game, Solid Snake doesn't sport a huge pair of breasts, legs to die for or combat attire straight from the catwalks of Paris. Yet, Konami's Metal Gear Solid looks set to make Snake a star of Lara Croft proportions anyway. A videogame star that does not need any

"Whoever wins, our battle does not end. The loser is freed from the battlefield but the winner must remain there..."

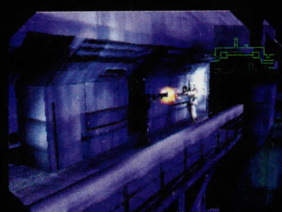
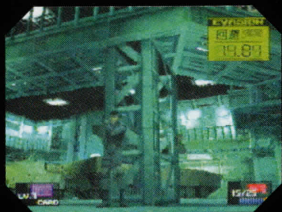
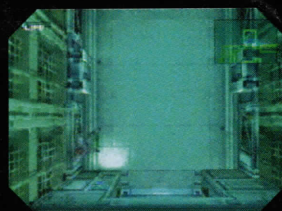
BIG BOSS - METAL GEAR 2 SOLID SNAKE



ONAGE ACTION GEAR I D



ABOVE: Solid Snake is always on the look out for a top lay. Does he get his hands on this peachy butt though?



superficial supplements to help sales. Purely because the game he stars in is one of such immense proportions that running around a bunch of caves and pyramids with a vain, pony tailed, peach-bummed, girl power aficionado becomes about as exciting and desirable as a Saturday night game of Mouse Trap with your toothless, old granny.

Metal Gear Solid makes no attempts to be trendy or PC. In fact, the main character, Solid Snake, is the type of macho soldier that was in boot camp at the age of ten, and performing carpet bombing runs of Vietnamese villages before he left school. He's also a little bit of a stud muffin too. Sexual innuendo punctuates his conversations with women, and they →

"There's a dog sled race this week..."
SOLID SNAKE – METAL GEAR SOLID

VR Training

The Skills involved in espionage and infiltration are many, so before you start your mission it's advisable that you visit the VR Training area to learn them.

As well as being extremely useful to the main game, the VR Training sections are actually a whole lot of fun too. You start off simply being taught the techniques. Once learnt you can go onto the frantic time attack mode which is superb for challenging other players on. After this you get to a shooting mode which then leads onto a survival mode. You can spend hours going through the training on Metal Gear Solid and although you'll be itching to get into the game, it is best to spend some time here so that you can get the most out of your main mission.

Past Encounters

You may, or may not know that Metal Gear Solid is actually the third game in the Metal Gear series. The first two games were available on the NES and MSX formats so it goes without saying that Metal Gear Solid eclipses them by massive proportions. The story lines however are still closely linked, so here they are in a nutshell.



METAL GEAR 2 SOLID SNAKE

Fast forward to 1999 for the second game. Par for the norm at this time of the century, an energy crisis is about to hit the world. That is until a scientist comes up with the answer: 'Oilix', is a micro-organism that refines petrol into a super-concentrated form thus solving the world energy problem at a stroke. However, the Nobel prize winning scientist is kidnapped by a military nation called Zanzibar Land. Armed with Oilix and nuclear weapons, this hostile nation could now establish itself as a new world power.

Enter Roy Campbell, new leader of Fox-Hound. He is ordered to rescue the scientist and Solid Snake is just the man for the job. After successfully gaining entry to Zanzibar Land, Snake comes across the Chief Engineer from the first game, who has again been kidnapped to build another Metal Gear unit, or so it seems. It also arises that the same man behind Outer Heaven, Big Boss, is the very man running Zanzibar Land.

After rescuing the engineer Snake is confronted by his old friend Grey Fox in control of the Metal Gear. It becomes clear that even the chief engineer of Metal Gear is not innocent and the developer of 'Oilix' is already dead. Snake defeats Metal Gear but a god like hand-to-hand fight follows with Grey Fox. After this battle the Big Boss appears and Snake has to call on all his strength to defeat the evil and save the world.

He succeeds, but is it really over?

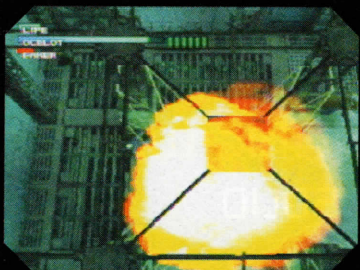
METAL GEAR

The first game is set in 1995. An international terrorist is holed up in an armed fortress known only as Outer Heaven. Intelligence reports suggest that a secret weapon of mass destruction is in development there so the Fox-Hound organisation are sent in to investigate.

Grey Fox, the most respected member of the squad took the mission but after a few days he disappeared, his last words over the radio was "Metal Gear...". Enter Solid Snake, one of the newest members of Fox-Hound. Snake infiltrates Outer Heaven, contacts the local resistance and in turn finds and rescues Grey Fox. It's here that they find out the terrifying reality of Metal Gear.

In order to destroy the Metal Gear Threat, Snake rescues the chief engineer on the project and his daughter, who has been kidnapped to ensure her father works on the project.

Snow manages to destroy Metal Gear but is confronted by his boss, Big Boss, who turns out to be involved in a massive conspiracy. Snake's job was to provide misinformation to the West, but nobody thought that he'd actually destroy the weapon. Do not underestimate Solid Snake.



just lap it up. All in all, we've got a man's man. Someone who's not afraid to fight with the men or fraternise with the ladies.

As a retired member of the secretive Fox-Hound organisation, Solid Snake (real name Albert Scrotum (probably)), is spending a reluctant life in the wilds of Alaska when his old friend and boss, Colonel Roy Campbell, calls on him for his services in combat as well as with the opposite sex. In fact he

doesn't so much call on him, as kidnap him, but after a little friendly persuasion Solid Snake accepts the mission. After all, the tension of the battle is in his blood.

The mission, a covert rescue operation, is one of great importance, as a breakaway group of the Fox-Hound organisation has stolen a nuclear weapon, and is threatening to launch a strike on the West, if its demands aren't met. An all out

"When did you become a dog musher?"
ROY CAMPBELL – METAL GEAR SOLID



TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION
METAL GEAR
SOLID



CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN: Surrounded! Stay and fight or peg it? Go for the latter or you'll end up as worm food; this mysterious being has the use of optical camouflage which makes him one of the toughest characters in the game. Check out the Predator-like effect on these gruesome screenshots: There's nothing more satisfying than sneaking up on an enemy taking a leak, and then throttling him.



offensive against this organisation would result in millions of Westerners being fried in a nuclear breakfast, so Solid Snake is employed to use his espionage and combat skills in a one man mission to save the world.

Covert Operations

Metal Gear Solid is sub-titled Tactical Espionage Action which is more than a big clue to the entirely original style of gameplay that the release contains. As much as Solid Snake is the roughest toughest kid on the block, Metal Gear Solid is not a mindless full-on explosion filled war fest. In fact, it's almost possible to play through the entire game without firing a gun once. Almost I say, because there is a full range of hardware at your disposal, if and when you decide to use it.

The main aim of the game though, is to carry out your mission objectives without being detected. This involves being incredibly patient, in order to avoid such perils as searchlights, security cameras and the

incredibly intelligent and aware enemy guards and soldiers that roam and patrol the enemy complex throughout the whole game. Your foe are known as "Genome" soldiers as they have all been genetically altered, although up against the basic enemy you wouldn't know this as they're not that tough should you get discovered, but they do a good job of tracking you and calling an alert.

Amazingly, all the guards have some degree of intelligence. If one of them notices something suspicious, which could be foot prints in the snow, water splashing as you run across a puddle, you leaving wet footprints on the floor or simply you making a

"One who has experienced the tension of battle can never leave the battlefield. I am the one giving you something to live for and that is war".

Big Boss – Metal Gear 2 Solid Snake



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Here, Solid Snake has to crawl through a tight air-duct to reach a room that holds an important key to the mission.

noise, then they will become more thorough in their duties. A cry of "What's that noise?" or something similar will let you know that they have seen or heard something suspicious, and are moving to investigate. Now you must hide, or sneak off in a different direction. These scenes could have ended up being incredibly dull but the camera angles, whether inherent in the game or controlled by you, makes hiding behind a wall with the enemy in view one of the most tense yet satisfying experiences you're likely get on the PlayStation. At times you'll just stand there doing nothing for minutes on end, whilst all the time waiting for your opportunity to make a dash or crawl to your next hiding place.

Professional Mugging

You can of course take the enemy guards out, with either a throw or a choke hold, but the noise of the scuffle may cause other guards to come and investigate. If you get spotted an alarm will sound and all the guards will go to their heightened alert status

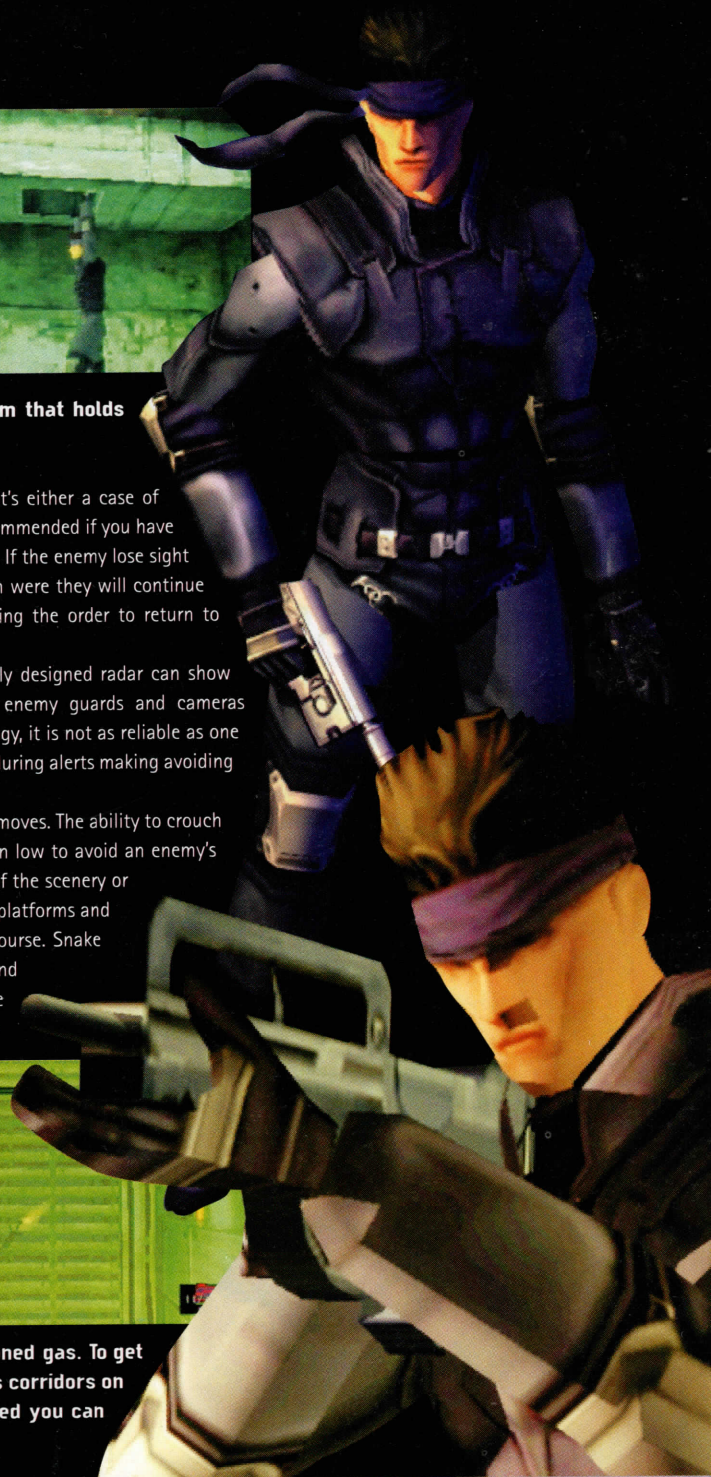
and come looking for you. Now it's either a case of stand and fight, which is only recommended if you have a weapon, or try to evade capture. If the enemy lose sight of you there is a short countdown were they will continue to search, before eventually getting the order to return to their posts.

To help you out, your specially designed radar can show you the position of all of the enemy guards and cameras although like all modern technology, it is not as reliable as one would like and it will be jammed during alerts making avoiding the guards rather more tricky.

Solid Snake has a plethora of moves. The ability to crouch and crawl allows him to get down low to avoid an enemy's gaze. You can hide behind parts of the scenery or crawl through tunnels and under platforms and tanks. If they're not moving of course. Snake also has a number of hand-to-hand combat manoeuvres that can be called upon in times of



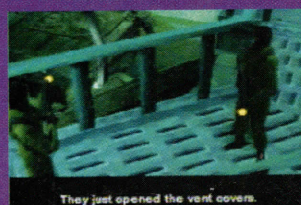
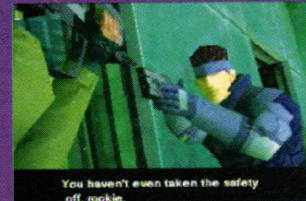
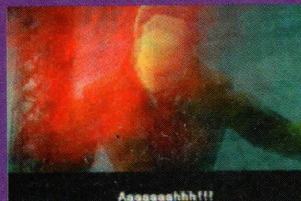
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: This area has an electric floor as well as being filled with deadly poisoned gas. To get to the gas mask you must first destroy the electricity generator, which is through various corridors on the other side of the area. Enter the Nikita missile launcher. Once the missiles been launched you can actually fly it around the corridors, making targeting the power box almost too easy.



Cut Scenes

In a bid to save disc space and memory, the expansive cut scenes in Metal Gear Solid are not of the usual rendered variety. Instead they use the game engine, which for any other games would fail miserably. With Metal Gear Solid, the graphics are so amazing, and the camera angles so cinematic anyway, that each cut scene really adds to the plot and the feel of the game. At times you won't even notice that these scenes are using the game engine – undeniable proof that Metal Gear Solid has the best graphics and graphic engine of any game in the market today.

A downfall of the admittedly excellent *Resident Evil* is that the voice acting is undeniably poor, something that Konami have obviously noticed. Although the voice acting isn't up to Anthony Hopkins standards, it is far, far better than that of *Resident Evil*. A few of the lines are a little dodgy, but the actors make the most of them whilst trying to avoid that videogame voice over cliché of dramatic over-acting. Lucky really because if the voice acting had been anything like that of *Resident Evil* we would probably have all been on the floor laughing, missing the storyline completely.

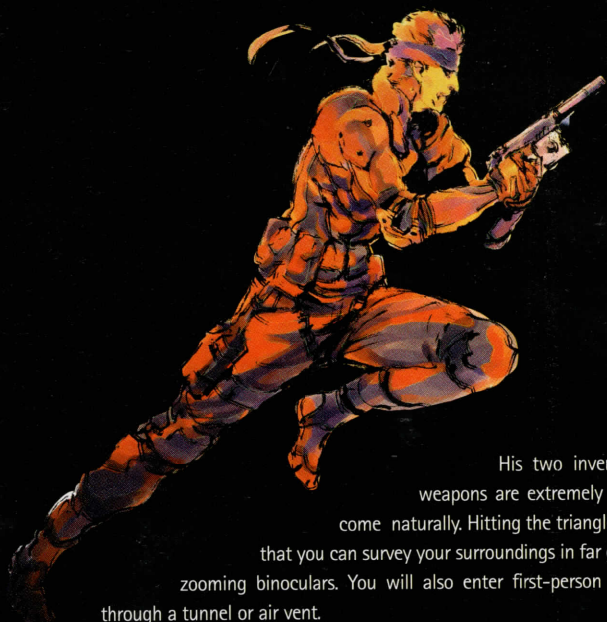


TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

METAL GEAR

SOLID





real desperation.

Controlling Snake could not be easier either.

His two inventories, one for items and the other for weapons are extremely easy to access and the rest of his moves come naturally. Hitting the triangle button puts you into first-person mode so that you can survey your surroundings in far greater detail – especially if you use Snake's zooming binoculars. You will also enter first-person mode automatically, whenever you crawl through a tunnel or air vent.

Jap Pap

Many magazines have already reviewed the Japanese version of Metal Gear Solid which in our eyes is fair enough. We decided to wait though, because after playing the Jap version we realised that the English game was going to have to be a whole new kettle of fish. If you own the Japanese game then no doubt you think it's the bee's knees and the dog's bollocks. But you are sadly missing out in many areas. For example the UK version has four difficulty levels, getting over the problem of the Jap version being too easy. Also, one of the most important aspects of the game is the incredibly deep, complex and immersive plot. And when all is said and done Metal Gear Solid relies just as much

on this as it does the highly original gameplay. So if you own the import version of Metal Gear Solid, and you can't speak Japanese, you really cannot enjoy it as the programmers had intended.

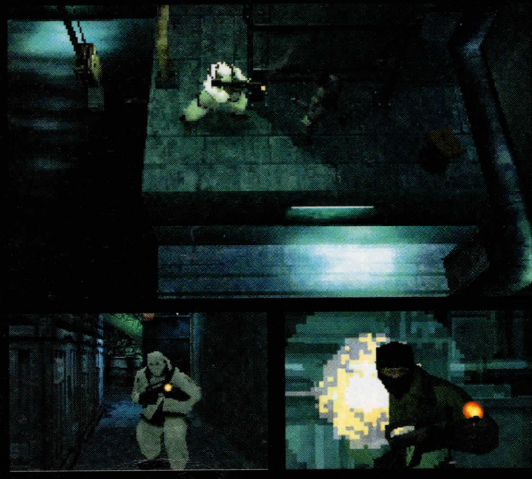
People quote *Resident Evil 2* as having the superlative video game storyline, and up until now I would have had to agree. After playing through (and understanding) the English Metal Gear Solid though, I can assure you that Capcom's admittedly superb *Resident Evil 2* looks like a community hall play compared to the Royal Shakespearean production that is Metal Gear Solid.

The story is dark, funny, emotional, and action-packed all in one incredibly well-scripted screenplay that for once, has some competent voice actors at the microphone. Of course, being a videogame that originally hails from Japan, there's a little corniness that creeps in, but when the rest of the storyline and voice acting is so professional and downright involving, this can be forgiven.

Stealth Fighter

When all is said and done, is Metal Gear Solid really that different from other 3D style adventures? And is this stealth business that's been talked about so much, really such an important aspect of the game? Well it is. And even more than that, it is actually the thing that makes the game so exciting. Although it won't be the first game to display this new style of gameplay (Activision's *Tenchu* looks set to be the one to claim that honour) Metal Gear Solid will still definitely be the best.

If played correctly there is actually very little need to confront the enemy and believe it or not, Metal Gear Solid is a better game when you do avoid combat. Hiding only yards from an enemy guard causes the tension to build up to a level not felt before in a videogame. Time after time, you'll find yourself backed up against a pillar or wall for minutes at a time, waiting for the guards to go about their business. Creeping around the base is far more fun than going in guns-a-blazing. As a result, Metal Gear Solid is one of the most original games around. Just make sure that you play it properly, that's all.



On the Wireless

Although as Solid Snake you are on a one man mission, you have plenty of back-up that can be reached via your Codec communications device. In order to avoid being detected this device is implanted into your ear so that only you, and not the enemy guards can hear it. You can contact a range of different people through your Codec, from military experts to doctors and friends. Each person has a different frequency that can be found as you play the game, so make sure that you have a pen handy to right it down. This is especially important as you have to know a certain frequency in order to save your game.



Look at the radar! It's picking up the DARPA chief. He's the green dot. Hurry and rescue him.

Looking Good

Even from the first screenshots of Metal Gear Solid (seen well over a year ago now), it was always evident that graphically it was going to be something special and people waited with anticipation for more news. What no-one anticipated was just how special it has actually turned out to be. The characters are some of the best drawn and animated that we've seen. An eye for originality was in there somewhere too, because most of the main characters are wholly unique. The Ninja character is the most impressive though. He has the ability to cloak himself and become almost invisible – what you actually see is a similar effect to the light refraction seen in the Predator movies. To achieve this on the PlayStation really is a feat of programming genius.

The whole game is based on an Alaskan Island called Shadow Moses and the varying environments found here all look fantastic. From the missile hangar to the workshops and including the offices, labs and basement, each area has a distinct feel and near-perfect realisation. The areas too are massive, and more solid than any other game yet seen.

Massive

One problem that many of the import reviews have brought up is that people think that the game may be a little short. We say of course it is – well the Jap version anyway – especially when you're skipping through the hours of cut scenes and voice-overs because you can't bloody understand them. Besides, Konami UK have added three new difficulty settings which weren't available on the import CD. In fact the easy level on the UK version is actually the closest to the Japanese incarnation, and after completing the game, playing again will bring up different problems and routes, in a *Resident Evil* style. So it's not over, even when it's over.

The finished PAL version of Metal Gear Solid is still a few months away, but we're already talking game of '99 here. It contains the kind of gameplay innovations, genuine surprises and graphical beauty that rarely graces the PlayStation and although judgement has to be reserved until the review co S appears, let us just say; Metal Gear Solid will not disappoint.

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東京ゲームショウ'98秋

With a possible unveiling of the PlayStation 2 hardware, a host of top software waiting in the wings and literally an army of willing Japanese PR girls, this year's Tokyo Game Show was definitely the place to be, or so you would have thought...



TOKYO GAME SHOW



TOKYO GAME SHOW

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The Tokyo Game Show was first held in August 1996 to commemorate the foundation of CESA, the Computer Entertainment Software Association. It has since become a regular event and as CESA celebrates its second birthday the Tokyo Game Show is now in its fifth year.

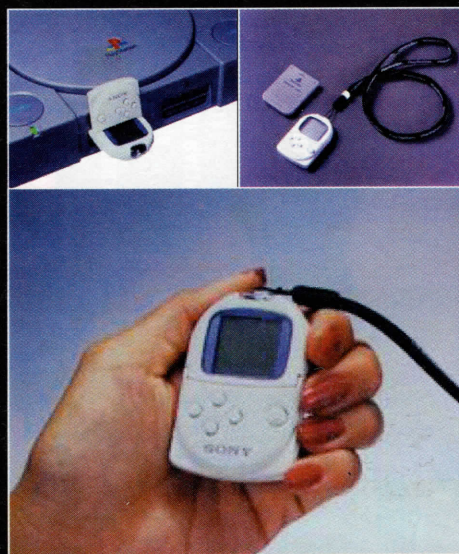
The largest exhibition of its kind in Japan, Tokyo Game Show is seen as one of the great achievements of co-operation between different manufacturers, sponsored as it is by Sony Computer Entertainment, Nintendo, and Sega Enterprises.

With a huge eight exhibition halls of the Makuhari Messe centre to cover in as many hours, we took a deep breath and immersed ourselves in the wealth of interactive entertainment that stretched out before us.

The first hall was a little daunting, unlike anything we had ever seen at a trade show; for one simple reason – there were no games whatsoever. The hall resembled some kind of indoor market, yet in place of none too fresh fruit, dodgy second hand videos and knocked-off Spice Girls gear, lay something much scarier. Run by such big name games companies as Square, Konami, Namco, and Capcom, the stalls were selling a baffling array of games merchandise. Everything from the usual T-shirts, models, and overpriced cuddly toys through to Biohazard (Resident Evil) body armour, snowboards with game logos on them, and shelves full of CDs containing various in-game music and sound effects. Deciding that shelling out the yen for these pieces of video game memorabilia was rather too Japanese for our Western tastes, we quickly made our excuses and left seeking a far more constructive use for our cash. →

POCKETSTATION UNVEILED.

Launching on December 23rd, the PocketStation can not only be used as a standard memory card but can be used to play its own games on. These games will be downloaded from the console via the memory card port, with 31 titles already confirmed as PDA compatible. Because the PocketStation also incorporates a calendar function, users will be treated to software making use of the flow of time or even the changing of the seasons – with the PocketStation plugged into the memory card the possibilities are quite literally endless. Add to this the ability to transfer information between PocketStations via infrared, this will be a must for all gadget freaks, but as a practical add-on to the standing hardware, we will have to wait and see.



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spanned both internal and external locations, with the outside sections taking place in almost complete darkness. The polygon character lead was fortunately equipped with a torch which lit up the surrounding area in a way that put the flare effects in *Tomb Raider II* to shame.

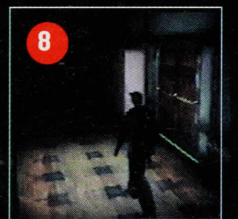
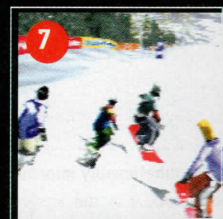
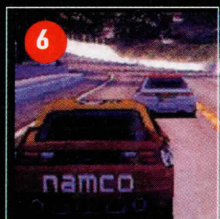
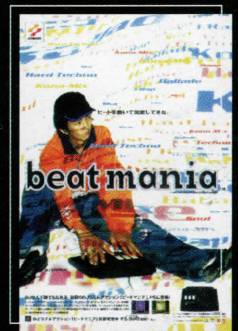
Break the Silence

The visibility was still extremely limited but the waist-high creatures that were attempting to tear us limb from limb were obviously finding it difficult to see as well, until I turned on my torch of course, at which point they spotted me and attempted to show me the impressive Game Over screen tout suite. The lighting effects in *Silent Hill* are easily the best seen on the PlayStation to date, as were, unbelievably, the rendered sequences, which easily matched the cinematic flair of *Tekken 3*, *Final Fantasy VII* or *Resident Evil 2*. Gameplay obviously borrows heavily from the Resident Evil series, and *Silent Hill* is more than an equal match to the classic survival horror epic. Suddenly aware of the large numbers of waiting gamers that had quickly amassed behind us, we decided to move on before samurai swords were drawn and most probably used.

Konami's second big title, *Beat Mania* was relatively free of congestion, this intriguing DJ simulator is currently at number one in the Japanese PlayStation chart, thus it only attracted minor crowds. Gameplay wise it is similar to *Bust a Groove* in that players have to press predetermined button combinations in time with the music. The main difference with *Beat Mania* is that it is best played with a specially made turntable peripheral from ASCII, incorporating the five buttons needed to play the game and a turntable roughly the size of a seven inch single. Having always fancied ourselves as budding Carl Cox's we dove straight... in and failed miserably. In

Having arrived before the show was officially open many of the stands were unmanned or not even fully erected, the first stand we came across that was fully up and running belonged to Cool Boarders developers, UEP Systems. Initially we only noticed two games on display, the peculiar *Rising Zan the Samurai Gunman*, and the predictable *Cool Boarders 3*, both on the PlayStation. Having already sampled these titles on a previous occasion, we decided to move on to Triple A territory.

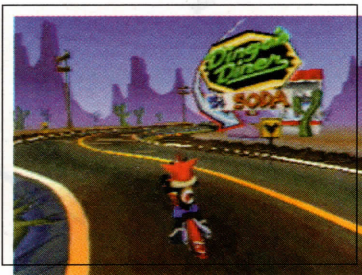
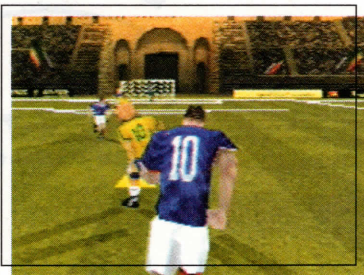
The first game on our must-see list was Konami's *Silent Hill*. Although we had played this game in some detail at E3, as well as having previewed it in Issue 1, we were pleased to find that there was some new playable code. The demo was simply titled 'Battle', and it unsurprisingly involved fighting off some particularly aggressive enemies. The level



1. CRASH BANDICOOT: WARPED
2. BLUE
3. DESTAGA
4. CHOCOBO RACING
5. ERGHEIZ
6. RIDGE RACER 4
7. COOLBOARDERS 3
8. SILENT HILL
9. DESTAGA
10. BLUE
11. COOLBOARDERS 3
12. CHOCOBO RACING
13. RIDGE RACER 4
14. SILENT HILL

東京
ゲームショウ





stand, a manga style RPG called *Tales of Phantasia*, and *Libero Grande* (reviewed in this issue).

Mild Disapproval

A little disappointed with the overall quality of PlayStation product on show (the limited amount of great titles, was overwhelmed by some extremely shoddy looking ones) We headed for the Sony stand looking for some redemption. Here we were faced with a stage full of around 50 young children singing what sounded like 'I want to be PocketStation?'. In fact around half of Sony's massive stand was devoted to the promotion of their PDA (Pocket Digital Assistant), or PocketStation as it is now known.

Rumours that Sony would spoil Sega's party by unveiling PlayStation 2 were obviously totally unfounded, as were those stating that Tekken 4 would be putting in an appearance. In fact Sony's stand proved to be more than a little disappointing, with *Crash Bandicoot: Warped* essentially the only major title on display (see the full review, also in this issue). That said though, *Crash Bandicoot: Warped* to be a full torso, head and shoulders above its predecessors with a large range of new moves and vehicles available to Sony's heroic marsupial. New vehicles include a car, a motorbike, a jetski, and a biplane. The vehicles also add a lot more to the gameplay than they have ever done before with the jetski section in particular looking almost as good as *Wave Race* on the Nintendo 64, stunts and all! Riding baby tigers and dinosaurs, and wandering around with a larger than life rocket launcher – made *Crash* a firm favourite with the frantic Japanese gamers.



Gamesplayers in Training

One of the games we were hoping to avoid whilst in Tokyo was the legendary train driver simulator, a game we all believed to be little more than a myth, until we were confronted with the Taito stand. Inside a life-size rail carriage there were no less than ten machines running the game *GO 2!* For the most part all ten screens appeared to be almost identical, the only real difference occurring when one of the gamesplayers excitedly happened upon a level crossing – the mind boggles. There is



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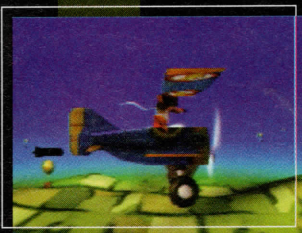
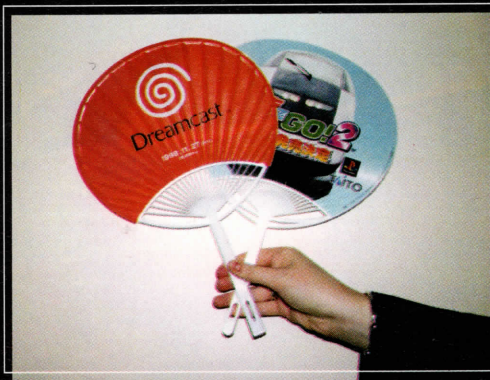
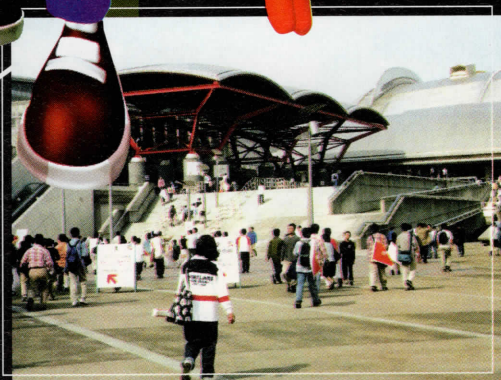
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TOKYO GAME SHOW



TOKYO GAME SHOW



even a specially made peripheral for the game incorporating a train driver's lever, feeding our suspicions that there is definitely something in the Japanese water.

Desperate to find a modicum of normality in what we had become convinced was some kind of videogame freak show, we sort cover at the Electronic Arts stand. Expecting a handful of sporting updates to calm our dizzy heads, however EA had other ideas. With only two games on the stand, one of which was the already dust-attracting *FIFA World Cup '98*. The other title, which it must be said was dominating the stand over *FIFA* in a major way, was *Theme Aquarium*. Not much needs to be said about *Theme Aquarium* if you've ever played any of the 'Theme' series, think of *Theme Hospital*, swap the beds and patients for aquariums and fish and you've pretty much got the idea. What makes *Theme Aquarium* interesting is that it will be one of the first third-party games to make use of Sony's PocketStation.

Allowing the player to raise the aquatic inhabitants via the add-on, Tamagotchi style, with the resulting changes uploaded to the PlayStation at a latter date.

The rest of the titles on show, were a baffling array of dating sims, countless *Resident Evil* and *Metal Gear* clones and faceless racers, each of which being as worthwhile as a chocolate Willy. Having had our fill, we left the event, exhausted if not a little overwhelmed by the complete culture shock, returning to our hotel and the welcome embrace of a faithful friend – an ice cold beer.

Back to the UK

The twelve and a half hour flight back to Heathrow afforded us plenty of time to reflect on what we had seen in Tokyo. The show is definitely intended for Japanese consumption, but if only for the curiosity value of many of the exhibits, it was definitely worth the visit. Whilst Sega were undoubtedly this year's stars with the Dreamcast wowing all on-lookers, the overall poor showing for the PlayStation is somewhat reflective of the console's age. Having dominated for over four years now, the record-breaking console is entitled to be looking a little long in the tooth. Whilst the intriguing PocketStation will undoubtedly breath some life into the old fella, there is no doubt that all Sony fans' eyes will now be on the arrival of the pending PlayStation 2, and next year could see a very different show indeed. Needless to say we've already booked our tickets.

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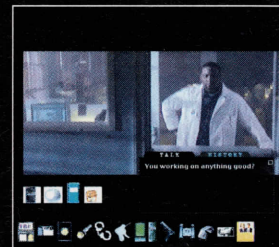
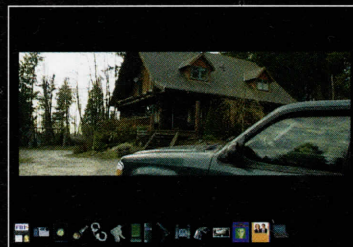
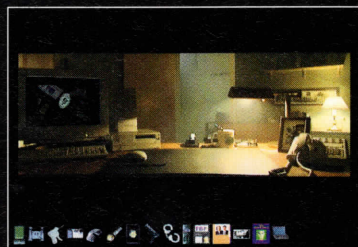
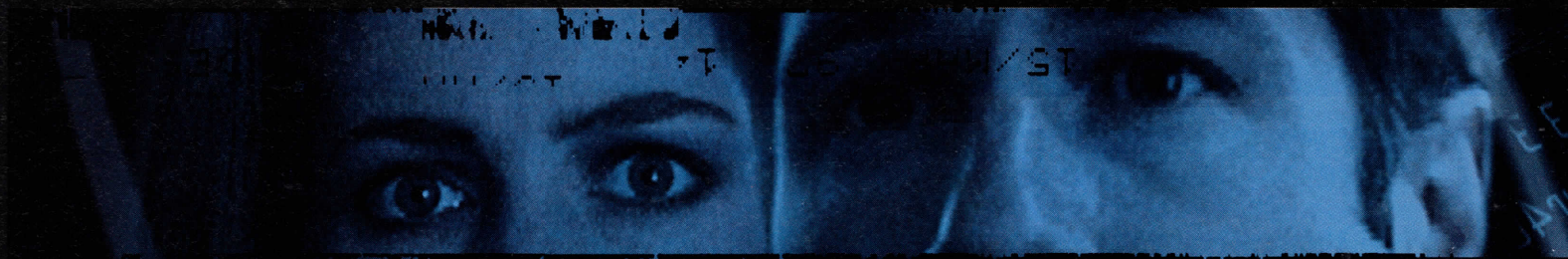


FILE UNDER



It's a phenomenon more powerful and far-reaching than any of its own plot lines. It's one of the most successful science-fiction franchises in television history. Its combination of extraterrestrial beings, FBI cover-ups and an ongoing 'will they, won't they?' love twist, has now even catapulted the show and its characters beyond the big screen and into their own videogame incarnation. We can only be talking about one series: the spookily unstoppable, X Files.





You may remember before the X-Files started, that a clever advertising campaign duped people into believing that the forthcoming supernatural show was actually based on real-life. Of course it only took a few episodes to work out that the adventures of Mulder and Scully were complete and utter fiction. Were we disappointed though? No – because the X-Files remained one of the most interesting, disturbing and entertaining shows of the nineties. And to top it all, we wanted to believe.

Mystery

Special Agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully have seen more mysterious goings on in the five years since the series' birth, than Ford Prefect has had hot dinners at the Restaurant At The End Of The Universe. Everything from shape-shifting aliens and the Loch Ness Monster's

cousin, to a man with a radioactive shadow have been investigated in the enigmatic agents' relentless search for the truth. And from what we've seen of the upcoming sixth series, writer and producer Chris Carter has not run out of freakish and unnerving storylines just yet.

Award Winning

The original cult following of The X-Files has swelled to massive proportions since its debut on the Fox network in the States way back in 1993. Since its low-key American debut though, The X-Files has earned massive respect from the television community and general public alike. The series is constantly in the top ten of the television show charts, it's won three Golden Globe awards for best dramatic series and has also been nominated for 16 different awards at the Emmy Award ceremony.

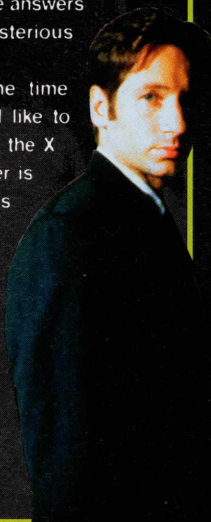
#1

A CASE FOR MULDER...

Fox Mulder, or Spooky as he'd be known to his friends if he had any, was once a rookie FBI star. Early in his career, his thesis on serial killers helped to capture an infamous murderer, but rather than continuing in this vein of work he side-stepped to the investigation of the paranormal. This led him to the FBI's X-Files. He now spends his time investigating events that have no scientific explanation in the hope that something may lead him to the answers that would explain the mysterious abduction of his sister.

Unbeknown to him at the time though, certain groups would like to see the back of both him and the X-Files for good. Mulder however is kept alive by the fact that he is an important pawn in a conspiracy of Biblical proportions, and protected by friends in very high places that he has yet to meet.

Mulder's search for the truth is an ongoing quest in which he only has one true ally, Dana Scully.



#2

A CASE FOR SCULLY...

Dana Scully's medical and scientific background made her the perfect candidate to help debunk agent Mulder and the X-Files. This plan however, backfired when she found herself sucked into Mulder's world of the supernatural and unexplained phenomenon. Her level-headedness acts as a perfect counterbalance to Mulder's fiery and often gullible temperament to ensure that as a team, they complement each other perfectly. She still believes that there is a scientific explanation for every X-File, although she is beginning to believe in the existence of a higher power, ever since her own abduction by aliens.

Scully often finds herself in the wars. As well as being physically attacked in almost every episode she has also contracted cancer and had it cured in the space of three months. The cancer was caused by the removal of a small implant she found in the back of her neck. Proof that aliens really do exist and are abducting humans for experiments, or is it good old Uncle Sam up to his dirty tricks again? Either way, Scully will try to find a scientific answer.



...The X-Files game, like the X-Files themselves is surrounded in secrecy. STOP. Screen shots from the PlayStation version are still at large. STOP. STATION agents have been dispatched to uncover the evidence. STOP. Meantime every shot in this dossier is PC format. STOP...

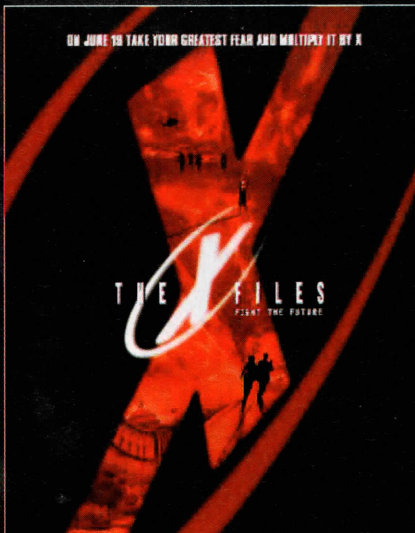
#3

THE X FILES:
FIGHT THE FUTURE

With a growing number of people having distanced themselves from the series, as the novelty began wearing a little thin, expectations concerning the big screen incarnation were bordering on sceptical. Yet the 90 minutes that followed the opening credits were not only enjoyable, but personally re-ignited my desire to seek out re-runs of the TV show.

The plot, penned by Chris Carter follows the well established traditions, with Mulder and Scully facing adversity from all corners as they try to uncover the truth behind a government conspiracy to hide an alien colonisation of the Earth.

Playing like a feature length episode, the movie delivers exactly what one would expect, albeit in grander form due to the increased budget, without alienating the uninitiated viewer.



Hollywood

Following this critical acclaim for the television series, this summer, The X Files made its cinematic debut with the X Files film: Fight The Future. Fans of the series were expecting the film to be a little dumbed down for a mass audience, but to their surprise it stayed true to the television show. Even to the point of containing plot threads that are vital to following the TV series properly. A shrewd move that made it essential viewing for hardcore fans and passive moviegoers alike.

Must Play

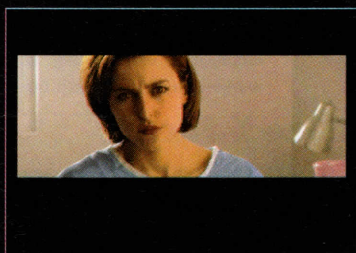
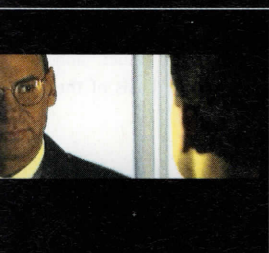
In the same way, fans and passive gamers alike will want to play the forthcoming Hyperbole Studios produced, and Sony published game. Because like the film itself, it too contains a plot that is important to the overall story of The X Files. In fact the

game is set to allow you to get closer to The X Files than ever before. You can become personally involved in the conspiracy; you will be there in the FBI office, in the dark dingy warehouse, in the top secret bases and you can deduce whether each scene in front of you holds any clues. The outcome of this X File will be up to you.

Interactive

The ultimate journey into the X Files then? Or a cobbled together collection of Full Motion Video? Either way, Sony's PlayStation game is the first chance to delve into a fully interactive version of The X Files. Whether this will work or not is yet to be answered. But rest assured, STATION is dedicated to finding the truth, and come March, in the 99th year of this century we will have it.

For now though, the investigation continues... → → → → → → → → → →



#4

THE GRAND SCHEME

You really do have to be an avid X Files fan to follow the ongoing conspiracy plot that has been an important part of the show from day one. The X Files game is reported to take this plot thread onboard so it seems that if you want the full story of this conspiracy then you will need to play through the game, as well as watch every single episode plus this summer's movie. A dedication that most casual X Files fans just haven't got, which is why we've donned our black suits and shades and investigated a conspiracy that outweighs the magnitude of the Profumo and Kennedy cover-ups put together...

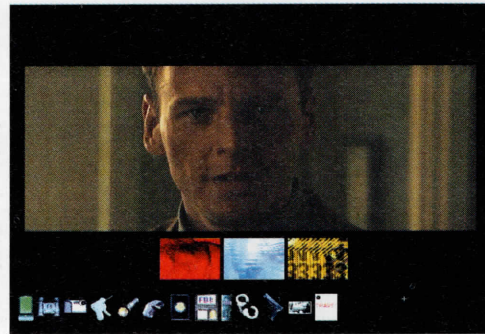
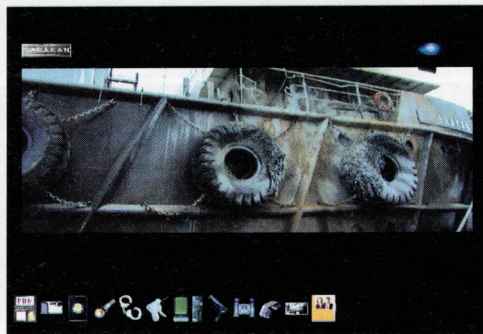
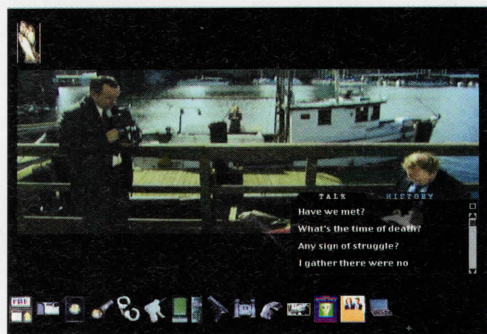
The alien colonisation of earth has been underway since just after World War 2. This involves the cloning of humans with alien DNA in order to

produce a race that is immune to the alien Black Oil, which is the integral part of this ongoing colonisation. As the program is stepped up though, the human syndicate that is secretly running things has become above the law, and will stop at nothing to see that their secret is safe.

Enter Mulder, Scully and the X Files. In an attempt to find the truth on these unsolved cases, Mulder and Scully uncover snippets of this secret and start to put the plot together. But how much of what they know is fact, how much of the information that they receive is really disinformation, and how can they put a stop to something which on the outside doesn't even exist? The truth is out there, but don't ever expect to find it.

Conspiracy Theory

What happens when FBI agents Mulder and Scully eventually uncover the truth? Will aliens take tea at the Whitehouse? Will the corrupt syndicate be bested? Will order be restored? And will Mulder finally shag Scully?



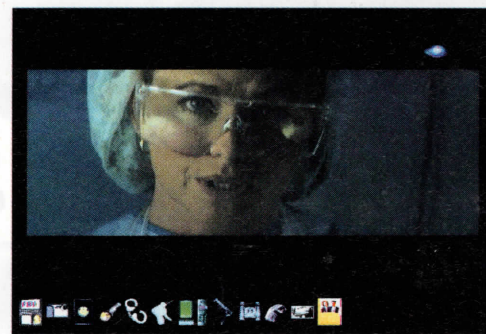
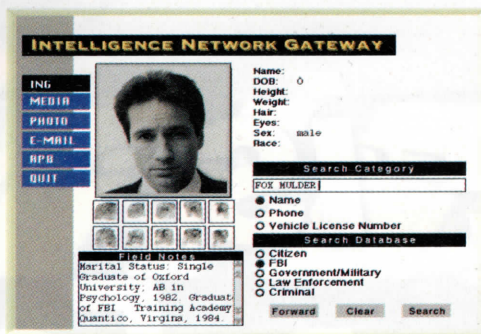
Who knows? We certainly don't. What we do know though, is that Hyperbole Studios, on behalf of Sony Computer Entertainment are deep into the development of the X Files game. And after the phenomenal success of both the television series and this year's 'X Files: Fight The Future' celluloid outing could it be that the truth can finally be found on the PlayStation? Probably not...

The game takes the format of a point & click adventure/rpg, which the developers are quick to point out is the best way to represent the detective/exploration style of the X Files themselves. We're, surprisingly inclined to agree with this; The X Files has never been a full-on action fest. which the game hopes to emphasise. Interviewing witnesses, tracking down clues and working in tandem with other FBI agents forms the basis of the

"The only truth we know is that The X Files is (gasp) going to be an FMV based game."



LEFT TO RIGHT: Fox Mulder stands in his classic gun out, gormless looking pose. Expect plenty of staple walking into a room with flash light action too; here's one for anally retentive fact fans. It's rumoured that the boat they used in the filming of the X Files game was actually used in the biggest drug haul in American history.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Like the TV series and the movie, the game offers a cool mix of action, and dialogue; as an FBI agent you have access to an intelligence network of massive proportions; our hero, Gillian Anderson, for once not looking her finest.

gameplay, although players will experience numerous other tasks that are vital to solving the case. The backbone of the X Files is (gasp) going to be FMV based. Although as it's the X Files I think you can safely discount any preconceptions based on the previous FMV monstrosities that you've had the misfortune to play.

Secret Plot

The details of the plot and case you're assigned to have not been divulged as of yet, but it's a good bet that you can expect some kind of conspiracy, a couple of murders, a few aliens and maybe a scientifically altered mutant or two. Staple X Files stuff we know, but the majority of people lap it up.

The FMV itself (of which there is over four hours) promises to be of the highest quality yet seen on the PlayStation, as Hyperbole Studios are using their established, but improved 'Virtual Cinema' system. Gillian Anderson and David Duchovny spent ten days filming their own parts for the X Files game, while in total, it took over seventy five days to film the atmospheric, well-acted and often exciting footage that fills the rest of it.



It's not only Gilly and Dave who've been drafted in to play their on-screen counterparts either. Many of the X Files villains also make an appearance, including the Cancer Man and Agent Skinner to help bring a little levity to Mulder's almost fanatical belief in anything supernatural. In fact, the episode of the X Files that simply portrays the life of Cancer Man, with hardly any appearance of Mulder and Scully, was reportedly shot because half the team were off filming the game.

Playable FMV

It's obvious that a lot of work has gone into making the X Files game as close to the television series as possible, and the level of the stars' involvement in the project shows a great deal of commitment on behalf of the X Files cast.

As for the possible success of the X Files game, that's almost guaranteed. The quality of course isn't but maybe we're going to see the first truly playable FMV game ever.

After all, we want to believe.

The X-Files

Publisher: Sony Computer Ent.

Developer: Hyperbole Studios

Release Date: March '99

Game Type: FMV Adventure

PAL Percentage Complete 30%

The Early Verdict

The X-Files: For

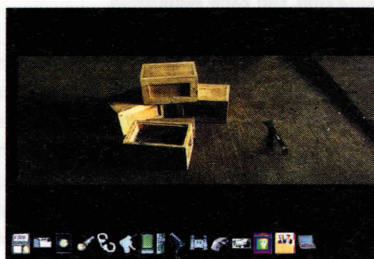
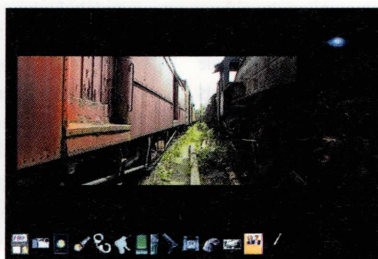
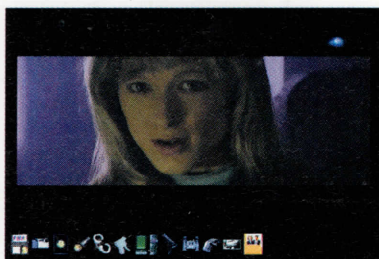
The X Files is one of the most popular TV series' of the nineties. There are over four hours of FMV video footage included in the X Files game, starring Gillian Anderson and David Duchovny. This footage will never appear on TV so if you want to see it, you'll have to buy the game.

The X-Files: Against

The above point also works against The X Files. Do we really want a game with over four hours worth of FMV on it? Okay, it promises to be the best quality seen on the PlayStation to date and it's also footage that you won't see anywhere else. But four hours worth?

Anticipation Rating 85%

This is one of the biggest licences of the nineties and fans can't wait to get their hands on it. Quite what the ordinary gamers will make of it we'll have to wait and see.



LEFT TO RIGHT: The producers have used many methods to make the FMV as interesting as possible. Here we see the action unfolding in the style of a surveillance camera; agent Skinner, and many other X Files favourites make an appearance alongside Mulder and Scully.

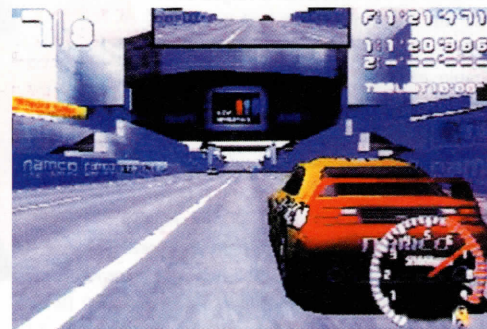
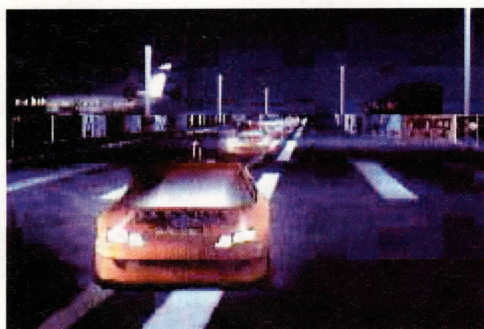


Concept Description

A blend of FMV adventure and role-playing gameplay, all mixed-up with a healthy dose of supernatural horror and Gillian Anderson. Sounds like a recipe for success.

There is a Fourth

In 1994, Namco's *Ridge Racer*, set the standard for the racing genre. Now, overtaken by Sony's *Gran Turismo*, Namco returns to try to reclaim its lost crown, with the latest incarnation: R4 – *Ridge Racer Type 4*.

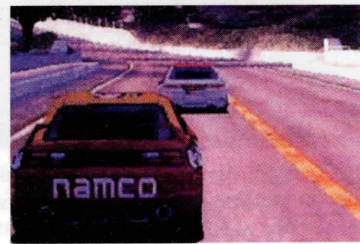
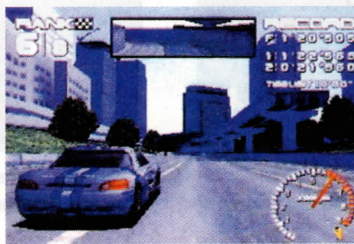
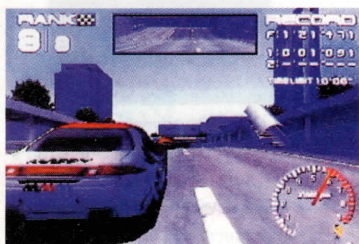
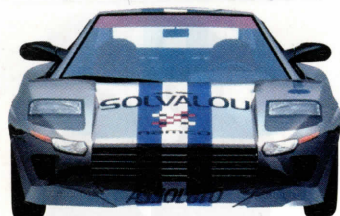


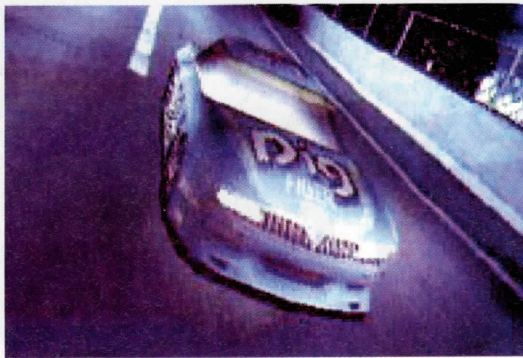
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The night time races do the programmers the most credit, just look at these, aren't they just smashing?; the subtle use of shadow and lighting effects have set this aside from the graphical style of the previous incarnations; shades of the original game crop up during some of the levels. Just take a look at the big screen here displaying the race highlights.

Boys love their toys, therefore making the inner male child easy to satisfy. After all, if you place a beer, a big pair of breasts or a flash motor, in my field my vision and you instantly have my attention. And although the humble car occupies a very poor third in my list of lust, it has always been an object of particular fascination to any bloke, which may offer quick explanation for the success of the racing genre. No matter how poor the game, the instant attraction offered by the combination of speed and shiny chrome, literally guarantees a modicum of entertainment can be milked from it.

Namco's seminal *Ridge Racer* was the first in the long line of PlayStation driving titles, and even though time has not been overly kind to the visuals, the gameplay remains enjoyable even today. Having shifted well over a million copies, Namco released the equally successful follow-up, *Ridge Racer Revolution* and a second sequel *Rage Racer*, supposedly the third and final entry. However, Sony's *Gran Turismo* proved beyond question that there was still life in the tired genre, and as a result Namco have once more returned to the franchise that established them as a leading

"The most striking difference between R4 and its predecessors is the huge leap in visual quality. Inspired by the graphical tour de force that was *Gran Turismo*, Namco's latest release utilises one of the most sophisticated graphics engines to grace the PlayStation."





LEFT TO RIGHT: Take a very good look at the backgrounds, the rich and varied textures, the level of detail and the lack of pop up. Hmmm nice: à la Gran Turismo. the replays are superbly rendered, shame they serve no real purpose.

light in PlayStation development, with R4: Ridge Racer Type 4.

Having alluded the press, over the last two months, full details have been finally made public along with confirmation of the content of this new installment.

Let's Get It On.

The most striking difference between R4 and its predecessors is the huge leap in visual quality. Inspired by the graphical tour de force that was *Gran Turismo*, Namco's latest offering utilises one of the most sophisticated graphics engines ever to grace the PlayStation. It is impossible to do it full justice upon paper, with the designers placing great precedence upon style. Take for example, the orange haze of a setting sun creating sumptuous shadow-drenched desert highways, or dim street lights adding an eerie neon glow to the vast cityscapes.

As the franchise that launched the PlayStation, *Ridge Racer*'s distinctly arcade-friendly gameplay changed by only minor degrees over the following installments. Yet when one considers that the revenue that these three racers have brought in, could happily fund a Mexican revolution, Namco's reluctance to change their winning formula is easy to understand. Therefore the rumour mongers' persistent speculation that Namco have double backed upon themselves with R4 favouring *Gran Turismo* style realism, seem rather ill-founded. Although, it is clear that some inspiration has come from the Sony racer. Such influences can



be easily recognised in the vast 300 plus car roster, the almost movie quality realism of the race environments and the remodelled vehicles, featuring some superb reflective and lighting effects.

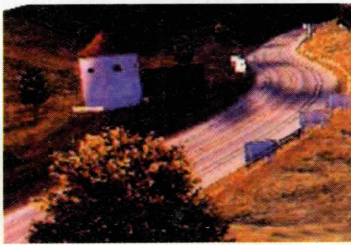
You'll Have To Teach Me.

Unfortunately the most damaging factor of the Ridge Racer series, has always been the limitation placed upon the number of tracks the player has access to race upon. Improving somewhat upon the original's single raceway, R4 features eight tracks, selectable at default with the promise of more as an incentive for victory. Also, the usual mirror and reserve modes are once again employed to pad out the longevity.

Amongst the usual arcade and time trial modes, Namco have introduced a season mode.

Dubbed Real Racing '99, it is similar in style to Formula One racing, with the player competing as a member of one of the fictional classic teams, like the Pac Racing Club, Racing Club Mappy and Dig Racing Team. The structure of this competition will allow the player to face a series of races in varying conditions and vehicles, with the ultimate goal of placing top of the league.

Ridge Racer has remained one of the most respected racing franchises available on the PlayStation. And Namco's ability to push the 32bit hardware to its absolute limits is almost guaranteed to ensure that R4 – Ridge Racer Type 4 is a fitting swan song to what has been an illustrious, benchmark series. ⑤



The Waiting Is Over

Fans of the Ridge Racer series have long been denied a practical two player mode. *Ridge Racer Revolution* supported link-up play yet the sheer hassle associated with humping a PSX, a television and a copy of the game to a mate's house made this almost completely impractical. Heavens be praised as Namco have seen the light and at last implemented a two player split-screen mode in the final coding of R4. Yet another reason to get excited about this title.



R4— Ridge Racer Type 4

Publisher: Sony

Developer: Namco

Release Date: December (Jap)

Game Type: Racer

PAL Percentage Complete **50%**

The Early Verdict

R4— Ridge Racer Type 4: For

The Ridge Racer series has gone from strength to strength, each update bettering its predecessor, therefore, unless something goes horrifically wrong, R4 should be the ultimate arcade racing experience.

R4— Ridge Racer Type 4: Against

Facing off against the astronomically cool *Gran Turismo* will naturally have a damaging effect upon Namco's racer, as its distinctly arcade-styled gameplay is not to all tastes.

Anticipation Rating 90%

Its Ridge Racer 4, come on, who isn't looking forward to this.



Concept Description

Ridge Racer has sex with *Gran Turismo* and spawns a feisty young upstart.

You Dirty Rat!

Rats, James Herbert made a fortune out of them, Good Morning TV made a big star of one of them and Mindscape's latest blend of puzzler and action, *Rat Attack*, finally lets you kill the filthy little buggers.

Rat Attack

Publisher: Mindscape

Developer: Pure Entertainment

Release Date: March

Game Type: Action/Puzzler

PAL Percentage Complete 80%

The Early Verdict

Rat Attack: For

Multi-player games are and have always been the finest way to experience video games, and in this area *Rat Attack* blossoms. The curious blend of gorgeous hi-res graphics and stylised character design will win many over.

Rat Attack: Against

Whilst the multi-player options are a delight, worries have arisen concerning the longevity the lone gamer can look forward to. Without further enhancements, the single-player mode could prove to be the title's downfall.

Anticipation Rating 30%

The recent release slippage will allow Mindscape to get the PR ball rolling, as thus far *Rat Attack* has had very little exposure.



Concept Description

Cats and rats, the same old story.

The Black Death, rabies and annoying presenters

of breakfast telly, are the only real contributions rats have made to the world. These grotesque pink-eyed monsters are a real pet hate of mine. Therefore, you can imagine my delight to be presented with a game, where the sole objective is the send the little buggers back to that big sewer in the sky. Pure Entertainment's *Rat Attack* has all the essential elements needed to make a frantic and time consuming classic. Its simple 'pick up and play' style allows gamers to venture in, have a quick bash, and then pop off to find some other way to fill the day. Obviously some readers will be turning their noses up at the above, but for those wanting a none too demanding way to kill half an hour here and there, *Rat Attack* looks to be just the ticket.

"These cats have a far more practical method of entrapment, a Ghostbusters style electrical trap which once laid around a rat will suck it up into limbo..."

Set in a kitsch, garish world, trapped somewhere between the 1950's and the 70's, the player adopts the identity of one of eight equally stylised felines. Their objective is simple – the game's 55 levels have become infested with rats and it is up to you to put a stop to their shenanigans. Unlike the long raging real-life war

between these creatures, the task is somewhat tougher than simply chasing the vermin down, pawing them to death and leaving the bloody mess that used to be a rat on the living room floor. These cats have a far more practical method of entrapment – a Ghostbusters style electrical trap which once laid around a rat will suck it up into limbo, dropping them off at a conveniently placed holding pen.

As the game progresses, various new hazards introduce themselves, such as duplicators, mutators causing the rats to transform into powerful hybrids of their old selves, and a variety of themed traps, in accordance with the environment.

Up to four players can take part in the mayhem during the multi-player competitive games, with each player having to capture a certain colour of rat whilst causing their human opponents as much bother as possible.



LEFT TO RIGHT: The area covered by the rat trap will vary between characters, or can be increased using power-ups; the lime jelly creature is in fact a mutated rat, which will probably make perfect sense, one day.

RULE 106

'Drivers taking part in practice and the race must always wear the clothes and helmets specified in the code.'

FIA Sporting regulations.



Formula One '98 Rules. OFFICIAL.



No Misbehavin'

Kick Off, the other great Amiga football game has already been ported to the PlayStation. And what a load of unplayable toss it was too. Let's hope that Sensible Soccer's PlayStation debut fares a little better...

Sensible Soccer European Club Edition

Publisher: GT Interactive

Developer: Sensible Software

Release Date: Dec '98

Game Type: Football Sim.

PAL Percentage Complete **80%**

The Early Verdict

Sensible Soccer: For

If GT can keep the exact same gameplay from the original games then Sensible Soccer European Club Edition could quite possibly prove to be the most playable football game ever. If they can improve it, which of course they should be doing, then it most probably will be.

Sensible Soccer: Against

These days, most gamers demand more than just a two button football game so Sensible Soccer European Club Edition may not fit the PlayStation football bill. Also, the graphics aren't up to the likes of FIFA '99 or Actua Soccer 3 so it may have problems in this department.

Anticipation Rating 70%

Sensible Soccer is often touted as the best football game ever. It's been a few years since people have seen anything of it so anticipation isn't quite as high as would be expected for a game of this magnitude.



Concept Description

Take one of the best football games ever and recreate it for the PlayStation. Simple exercise in raking in the dough.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Sensible Software are famous for their not so sensible approach to games, which can be witnessed in this cartoon style animation; Sensible Soccer in 3D. What is the world coming to?

Minuscule men running around on a one colour pitch with two button control and a dodgy soundtrack does not a great football game make. Or so you'd think. Amiga owners would tend to disagree with this statement though. For they had the immense *Sensible Soccer*. A football game that had no special moves, no polygonal players, no plethora of stadiums and no licences. Just pure unadulterated playability.

Now though PlayStation owners can look forward to getting their hands on their very own version of this classic footballing giant because Sensible Software are back with Sensible Soccer

Simple Soccer?

This is partly to do with the two button control system. One button for pass and one for shoot. That's it really. Don't get us wrong by thinking that Sensible Soccer European Club Edition is easy though, because it most definitely isn't. The intricate gameplay takes a lot of skill to master, although beginners will still be able to pick up the joystick and have a decent game of soccer, learning as they play.

Apart from the graphical developments, which include faster, smoother animation and bigger players, other improvements include

"Luckily then, it doesn't look as though Sensible Software have gone the Anco route and totally destroyed their footballing gem, a la Kick Off."

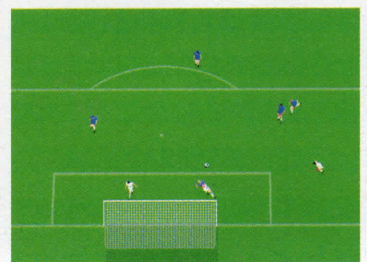
European Club Edition. Of course this is no straightforward port from the original Amiga version because people would simply look at it and dismiss it in the blink of an eye-lid. But, although the graphics have been changed, for the better of course, that all important addictive, and most importantly fun, gameplay is still in there.

The basic premise of Sensible Soccer European Club Edition isn't to outshine the competition in the 'Wow, look at that' department, just to simply out play them instead.

the tackling engine, which has been rewritten to make challenges more realistic, more after-touch and defenders with an extra burst of speed. Happily, even though the game is much faster and smoother overall, it still retains that trademark Sensible gameplay.

Luckily then, it doesn't look as though Sensible Software have gone the Anco route and totally destroyed their footballing gem. We just hope that enough people who haven't played Sensible Soccer will see past all the big boys this Christmas and give Sensible Soccer European Club Edition a try.

⑤



I'll see you in hell

Kurushi, Kula World and now Devil Dice. Has Sony got the PlayStation puzzle game market sewn up? Probably...

Sympathy For The Devil? Not bloody likely. We're the ones who need sympathy, after being forced to sit through an afternoon's worth of Sony's satanic puzzler, Devil Dice. Not because it's terrible though, but because it's one of the most challenging/frustrating games we've ever come across.

Devil Dice casts you in the role of a small red devil, not the type who likes to steal your soul and damn you to the Pit of Hades for eternity, of course. No, he's the nice type of devil. The type you could sit down and eat a vegetarian casserole with. As well as practising niceness for a hobby though, this devil also has some kind of fetish for Dice. So much so that he spends all his time rolling around on them trying to make equally numbered chains of dice. And that people, is what Devil Dice is all about.


Taking control of your mini Lucifer is a simple case of using the D-Pad. You have to get used to the isometric 3D viewpoint but after five minutes the controls become second nature. Now the hard bit. When standing on a dice, moving little Beelzebub will cause it to flip over. This of course brings another number up to the surface.

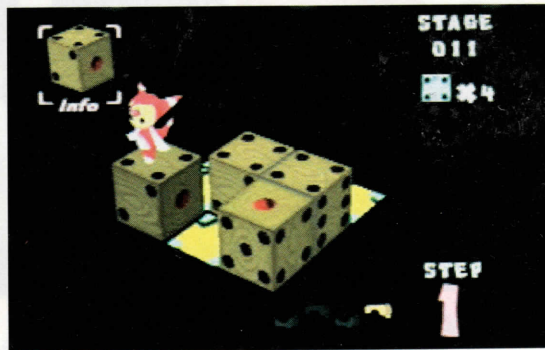
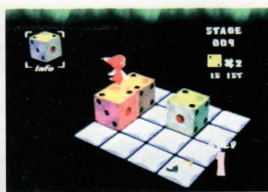
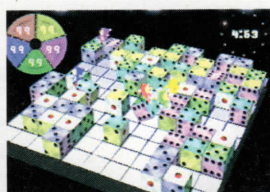
"... from what we've seen of Sony's satanic pseudo Yahtzee, hell could soon be chilling out."

With this in mind you have to match up the different numbers in the playing area. You can't simply match up any amount of numbers though. If you're dealing with the number six, you have to link up six altogether. If it's twos though, you only have to link the two. Geddit?

Once you've formed a chain of the right number of die (or more) they will flash and sink into the ground.

Whilst they sink you have the chance to get rid of more die if you can match them before the sinking die disappears. I hope you got all that. There are several modes of play to Devil Dice including a multiplayer battle mode, for which, it would seem, the word hectic was created for. There's also a puzzle mode where players have to complete certain chains within a limited amount of steps. Which is every bit as tough as it sounds.

Sony's previous puzzle games have garnered a cult following, although we at STATION reckon that they deserve more. It'll be a cold day in hell before recognition of games like Devil Dice reaches mainstream levels though, but from what we've seen of Sony's satanic pseudo Yahtzee, hell could soon be chilling out. 



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The puzzle game is the most sedate thing that Devil Dice throws at you as you're not against the clock or any other players. Simply complete the set puzzle in a set number of moves. This is great for training.

Devil Dice

Publisher: Sony

Developer: Shift

Release Date: Feb '99

Game Type: Puzzle

PAL Percentage Complete **75%**

The Early Verdict

Devil Dice: For

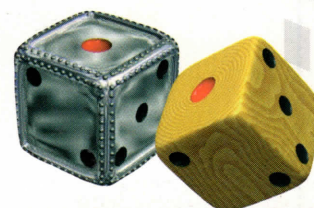
Sony's coloured puzzling past has been used to maximise the challenge that Devil Dice offers even the most hard-core puzzle gamer. We also think that Devil Dice would make an excellent learning tool for first and middle school kids, if the difficulty was toned down.

Devil Dice: Against

Devil Dice does have the ability to turn a mild mannered, well-balanced person into a crazed mass murdering lunatic. It's frustrating you see. Not frustrating like Tetris, or not getting your end away for a few weeks. We mean frustrating like standing in front of a willing, naked supermodel, with brewer's droop. Understand?

Anticipation Rating 35%

Sony puzzle games have never really set the world alight, but those who have played Kurushi and Kula World will be waiting with bated breath.



Concept Description

Control a little devil in a bid to build chains of identically numbered dice.

Men and W@xsticks
Men and W@xsticks



MEN AND J



"You spend more time on that bloody PlayStation than you do with me these days!"

Sound familiar? It should be as it's the common cry of the much neglected, PlayStation Widow. Otherwise known as – the missus, as she labours the point (again) about not spending enough time shopping/talking/walking/arguing with her.

Trouble is women never really seem to understand. It's like the gateway to a time warp when we switch on our PlayStation for a 'quick' blast, seconds become minutes, minutes become hours. Yet in reverse, time seems to slow to a crawl as soon as she starts telling you about the girl at work, or what so-and-so said about what's-his-face the last time the family got together.

So do yourself a favour lads and share the next four pages with the one you love. This feature is dedicated to the games' widows of the UK, in the hope that they may gain some understanding of the male psyche. Go on, pass your mag to her for a while and Dr Perry will try to explain ...





OYSTICKS



Listen darling, I don't care how un-PC I am currently being but the straight truth is not that the majority of women do not understand their man's preoccupation with his joystick, it's actually that they will NEVER understand it. Oh yes, I know that there are a modicum of girlies out there doing there best to accept their lot.

There are even more advanced women who are actually attempting to join in with this addictive and rewarding exercise in self-amusement at home. Still, on the whole though it is still a bewilderingly male dominated hobby. Recent market research shows that although the number of females entering the games hobby has risen in recent years, girls still only account for at best 5% of the total number of videogames consumers in the UK. Only 5% of one of the fastest growing areas of youth culture that this country has ever seen! It's ludicrous, it's remarkable, but more importantly, it begs the question - why?

I used the expression 'bewildering' a few sentences ago, and many leading spin-doctors and marketing gurus throughout the years have tried everything within their powers to entice more females into the

hobby; after all, it is a massive market still relatively untapped. But I would say that the problem is not one of bad marketing or unsuitable product, or even a failure to understand the female psyche. My belief is that the reason that videogames appeal to boys and not girls is purely natural.

I'll explain...

GAMES ANIMALS

Firstly, we have to remember that at the end of the day we are all just animals. Alright, we like to credit ourselves with a fair bit more intelligence and (on the whole) better manners than your common deer, but it is a natural instinct for all young male animals to need to lock horns. Take a look at any species in the animal →





kingdom. As soon as the males of a group reach adolescence the first instinct they seem to have is to attempt to prove themselves against other males. We label it machismo, we call it showing-off, we blame it on testosterone, but at the end of the day young men just have a naturally competitive nature. The console provides these young braves, testing their boundaries for the first time, with the perfect medium for confrontation. Have you ever watched two young lads playing *Tekken* against each other? It goes way beyond being just a game, it becomes a matter of personal pride, a matter of life and death. Females just don't have this same desire to compete running through their veins. Can you imagine a teenage girl getting involved in anything so trivial? No, of course not. In their teens girls have

far more interesting things to do. In the past young lads would have gone out to play in the streets to test themselves against rivals by playing football, building camps, or simply bloodying each other's noses. Trouble is, whilst I would agree that playing out of doors is, in theory, a far healthier form of self-expression, in the same breath I would have to acknowledge that the wide open spaces of 20 to 30 years ago just aren't there any more. When I look back at the area where I grew up, most of the woodland, fields and old derelict buildings that form the backbone of our playing environment have all been developed upon. There is very rarely anywhere for children to play these days, but this has far less of a dramatic effect on girls.

TEA PLEASE DOLL

Most pre-teen girl games involve dolly's and tea parties, and don't require anywhere near the space that boys need to charge about in. Even skipping can take place in a relatively small play area. The reason for this is that the developing female mentality is completely different to that of males. Young girls tend to bond more within their social groupings and nurture far more empathic feelings towards each other. Yes they

are still competitive, but in a far less direct, combative manner. And by the time they have reached their teens they are beyond playing games anyway. Winning on a simple electronic game would not produce anywhere near enough satisfaction for them. By this time they are competing in the big wide world for the first time, they are competing in a world that the boys can only dream of.

LIPSTICK AND POWDER

Teenage girls by the age of fourteen are no longer particularly interested in boys of the same age. They are going out with young men. Men who have their own cars, jobs, money and are far more mature than the lads they left back at home thrashing away on their joysticks. These girls have the capability to look 18 with a swipe of a make-up brush, a short skirt and a





wonder bra. As a result they can purchase alcohol, go to night clubs and switch onto the kind of lifestyle that boys of the same age can only dream of.

So what are young boys going to do to occupy themselves? Well, if they can't play out, then they're going to have to play in, and let's face it, a games console or computer gives access to a world of possibilities far vaster and wide-ranging than anything they'd find down the local rec anyway.

CRISIS – WHAT CRISIS?

Instead of attacking videogaming as being an unhealthy hobby, parents maybe ought to be far more grateful to the use the console serves. Chances are that in the light of the ever growing urbanism that is sweeping the cities and towns of today, the rise of the videogames hobby may have prevented a great deal of 15 to 16 year old boys from going through a major early life crisis the like of which has never been

experienced before by modern society. It may have provided an extremely 'healthy' outlet that has stopped a great many youngsters from getting into trouble through sheer boredom. It's funny how things tend to balance themselves out. We could look upon it as an evolutionary thing I guess. A kind of Darwinian development for Generation X.

PLAY TO WIN

As they get older, the competitive urge that men feel as boys never really leaves them. In fact most women will back me up when I say that men never really grow up.

For example; football. A vast number of men play non-stop as children, filling every waking hour with games of Wembley, Spot and Headers and Volleys. The thing is, many of them still continue to play for as long as they can into their later years too. Turning out on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings, only by this time it is combined with a drinking ritual and, for many, the inability to walk properly the next day. There is no female behaviour even remotely comparable to this. Females seem to instantly identify what is a constructive use of time and what is just an excuse for play.

I even believe that the dream that most men have of having a son has far more to do with wanting to live out a second childhood than the desire to sire a miniature version of themselves. A chance to buy racing cars again,

play football in the park, and of course get all the latest computer and videogame hardware...for the lad of course.

BOYS WILL BE...

Men are in a constant state of competition. Whether it concerns how many pints they can drink, how much a flash new suit cost or whether or not they can 'pull' the blonde at the end of the bar; this almost childlike need to prove oneself is very much a permanent part of the male libido. It is also a trait of the male animal that I believe a great number of women find endearing, although they would probably never admit it. I mean who would really want a non-competitive man? Surely this competitive edge is very much a measure of their ambition and desire to be number one; to be a huge success. And at the end of the day, if a man feels the need to prove himself, to test his metal against a rival or rivals, surely going for the next level on a videogame is one of the most harmless ways he can go about it.

So next time you are yelling at your man for playing on his PlayStation instead of paying you more attention or decorating the front room, just think of the many other ways in which his competitive nature could manifest itself, and thank Sony that right now, at least you know where he is.

Go on, take him a nice cup of tea.

Sorted.



Miss PlayStation 1998

What better way to follow a feature about the battle of the sexes in videogaming than to hold a virtual event mirroring what has to be the biggest single celebration of 'laddism' and 'sexism' that modern society has ever embraced – Miss World. Whilst the games industry continues to churn out a production line of testosterone titillating totty for a 95% male consumer base, we feel it is our duty, as the sexist pigs that marketing men have obviously decided we are, to line them up, leer at them and rate them in time honoured style. So here we go. Who will be crowned Miss PlayStation 1998 by the discerning STATION beauty experts, and who should have spent a bit more time on the rendering machine? Over to our comperes:

"Welcome ladies and gentlemen, to the event you've all been waiting for. That's right, the STATION Videogame Miss World pageant. Where the best of the PlayStation silicon beauties battle it out to win the coveted throne of beauty queen of the PlayStation."

The competition's hot though, with the unofficial queen of all things PlayStation, heading up a cast of hopeful young starlets. Can Ms. Craft hold off the possee of pouting pretenders that nip around her ankles? Or will there be a new queen of PlayStation T&A. Let us introduce you to..."

#1 Lara Croft

#2 Niki

#3 Nina

#4 Claire

Lara Craft (Tomb Raider)

JOB: International star of massive proportions. And she's famous. Started out on the road to fame as a freelance treasure hunter and the combination her shapely assets and BA Baracus sized attitude propelled her to the dizzy heights of mass market stardom. Has it gone to her head though?

ASSETS: Yes

AMBITIONS: To find the Holy Grail. Probably. And make the big leap into movies.

IDOL: Indiana Jones

ONE WISH: That her boobs would stop growing with every new *Tomb Raider* outing.

SHE LOVES: Antiques and Travelling.

**THE WINNER IS...**

And now over to our panel of STATION beauty experts for the results of our first ever PlayStation Miss World.

DAVE: For me it has got to be Sunny Flower. I like 'em young you see, and there's that whole 'doggy' thing going on...mmm, mmm.

SAUL: Lara Craft wins hands down. She may have been around a little but her upper class up bringing gives her style that none of the other contestants could hope to match. Shame about that ceeegar though.

JAMES: Going on the emptiness of my dance card in recent months, my vote has to go to Claire, after all having spent most of her time in the company of the undead, maybe she'd find me rather attractive.

HAVE AN OPINION...

So the jury is tied. Not that it really matters though, because the only real winners in these obvious but effective attempts to exploit the frailties of the male libido are the games publishers themselves. Still it makes for a nice bit of eye candy and is the perfect excuse to have scantily clad women wandering about at every exhibition, show and games launch we attend. Hey, they even threw Lara on stage with Micheal Owen as he publicised *World League Soccer* and that poor boy's only just out of puberty!

Birds in videogames. Is the current climate offensively sexist or does it just make sound business sense? Isn't it all just a bit of fun anyway?

We'd like to hear your opinions...

**Niki (Pandemonium)**

JOB: Platform babe. Although she has no real employment, she passes the time by getting her friend Fargus out of trouble and posing for male readers in videogames magazines.

ASSETS: Large and rounded.

AMBITIONS: To star in her own platform adventure without her clown of a friend Fargus.

IDOL: Mario, the king of platform games.

ONE WISH: To leave the beaten track. To go off the rails a little.

SHE LOVES: A good long jump.

**Nina (Tekken)**

JOB: Professional hard bird. Has had great success on the unarmed combat circuit and is widely regarded as the hardest woman on PlayStation. Chances are if she loses here tonight the competition will be in for a good sound kicking.

ASSETS: Legs to die for, although being this fit has had a detrimental effect up top.

AMBITIONS: To become master of The King Of Iron Fist Tournament.

IDOL: Bruce Lee

ONE WISH: That the world could be a peaceful place.

SHE LOVES: Kebab queue brawling.

**Claire (Resident Evil 2)**

JOB: Zombie hunter. Although she does not hold this occupation by choice, she has fared so well that it must be the perfect position for her. She was thinking about taking up a career in voice acting also, but friends advised her against this. For some unknown reason.

ASSETS: With a voice as annoyingly over the top as Claire's, all her other assets are lost.

AMBITIONS: To find her brother. Who's probably wandering with the living dead right now.

IDOL: George Romero

ONE WISH: That pink denim will come back into fashion..

SHE LOVES: The sound and sight of blowing a zombie's head off.

**Sunny Funny (PaRappa the Rapper)**

JOB: Being the girlfriend of the coolest rapping dog on the PlayStation. She drives her otherwise inept boyfriend on to bigger and better things by being both demanding and flirting with in-game characters.

ASSETS: Beautiful pink petals were other people have hair.

AMBITIONS: Not to go to seed at too early an age.

IDOL: Snoop Doggy Dog

ONE WISH: To star in a sequel of her own.

SHE LOVES: Doggy style!

**Red Lotus (Deathtrap Dungeon)**

JOB: Adventurer/Torture Chamber Madam. A born adventurer who lives for the challenge. It's also an excuse to kill men, and wear leather outfits way too small for her bizarrely shaped breasts.

ASSETS: Her kinky wardrobe.

AMBITIONS: Kill all men.

IDOL: Cynthia Payne

ONE WISH: All men were dead.

SHE LOVES: Killing men.



#6 Red Lotus

#5 Sunny Funny

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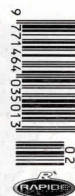
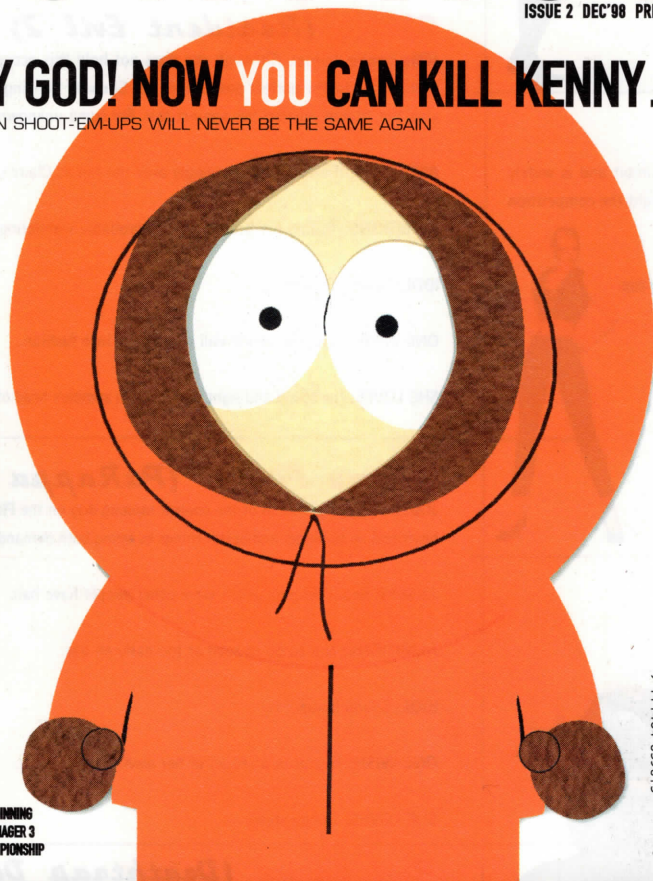
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02
RAPIDE

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Played and Rated

[50] Crash Bandicoot: Warped [56] TOCA 2 [60] Colony Wars: Vengeance [62] Music [66] Actua Golf 3 [68] Libero Grande [70] Cool Boarders 3 [74] NFL Blitz [76] Lemmings [77] Small Soldiers [78] Pysbadek [80] Test Drive 5 [81] Test Drive 4X4 [82] SMALL REVIEWS: NFL Extreme Pool Shark V-Rally-PLATINUM Streak

Facing the Music

The Final ratings awarded in Station are presented as percentages. We have chosen this system for two reasons: it is the industry standard and research has shown it's the preferred method of scoring for both consumer and retailers alike.

90-100%

The blueprint for games in this category came from the music sheets of The Beatles. Everything is as perfect as it can be, and sure to stand the test of time.

80-89%

Oasis may be a great band but next to the 'Fab Four' they're mere pretenders to the throne. And it's the product of those Mancunian tykes the Gallaghers, that is comparable to the quality of the games in this bracket.

70-79%

Keith, Mick and the boys could have had a hand in the games here. Not everything's as tight and good-looking as it might be, but these games certainly aren't gathering any moss either.

60-69%

"You're so pretty, oh so pretty, Vaa-cant!" The Sex Pistols' classic rant 'Pretty Vacant' sums up the games you find here perfectly. Basically, there's something missing.

50-59%

Remember the New Romantic movement? Popular at the time, but ultimately laughable and shallow, with little chance of standing the test of time.

40-49%

There are two schools of thought on 70's prog rockers Pink Floyd. Some say they suck others say they rule. And just like games that score here, it's really down to personal opinion.

30-39%

The Girls Spice may well have some redeeming qualities, but much like the games found here you'd only buy an album for someone else, and you'd never admit to actually owning one.

20-29%

Capital FM. The programming's poor and the DJ's are ugly. Now look at these games and apply the same thinking.

10-19%

A night spent playing games here is like being subjected to the latest blend of Gabba & Country (Gantry) on a 50K sound system in your nan's box room.

0-9%

Just think 'Barbie Girl'.

Trust the Triple A

The Triple A stamp is our personal guarantee to you that this game means business. We promise that everyone - apart from the most pedantic buffoons - will reap months, if not years of enjoyment from it. The gameplay is unsurpassable, the visuals put Leonardo Da Vinci to shame and the sound has been lovingly caressed by the ghost of Amadeus. Perfection is subjective, therefore a perfect game can never exist, but a Triple A award is as close as it gets.



50

Crash Bandicoot: Warped



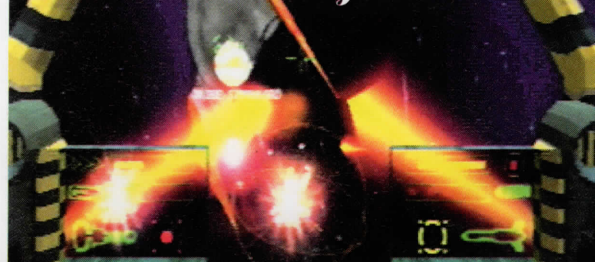
56

TOCA 2



60

Colony Wars: Vengeance



Talking Pages

Here is a quick guide to what to expect on the pages of Station's Played and Rated section:

PLUS/MINUS

Two reasons why you should consider this game, two reasons why you should be wary.

- + In-depth and thoughtful gameplay.
- + Superb Eastern soundtrack.
- The camera comes unstuck at times.
- Some frustrating gameplay elements.

SCORE

This is what you're looking for. This is the country's most respected PlayStation magazine score: 100% unofficial, 100% unbiased, 100% honest!

OUT OF 100

87

Played and Rated Index

50 Crash Bandicoot: Warped

"A traditional platformer in next generation trousers Crash Bandicoot: Warped works."

56 TOCA 2

"TOCA: Touring Cars is as essential, if not more so, than Sony's Gran Turismo and Codies very own Colin McRae"

60 Colony Wars: Vengeance

"The space-bound action is by far the most elegant, and sophisticated ever to grace the PlayStation."

62 Music

"The sheer quality of the sounds that can then be developed bears comparison with many of the nation's current dance floor-fillers."

66 Actua Golf 3

"...offers a great looking, intensely addictive and complete game of golf."

68 Libero Grande

"Sony have taken it upon themselves to give football supporters what they want: a football game with a difference."

70 Cool Boarders 3

"...one of the most wicked games the PlayStation has ever seen, dude."

74 NFL Blitz

"The animation and abilities of the sprites is completely overblown..."

76 Lemmings

"Psygnosis returns to the game that became a classic and helped it to become the company that it is today."

77 Small Soldiers

"...production line tosh that will sell purely because of its license."

78 Psybadek

"The track design is commendable with each bend revealing a new challenge"

80 Test Drive 5

"...pad control on Test Drive 5 isn't terrible, just a little nondescript."

81 Test Drive 4X4

"Test Drive 4 x 4 wasn't just at the back of the queue when they handed the gameplay out, it was in the wrong one."

82 Small Reviews

NFL EXTREME

"NFL Extreme has no soul."

POOL SHARK

"The visuals, gameplay and options all too have a high gloss finish."

V-RALLY [PLATINUM]

"...there's no excuse not to buy it now."

STREAK

"...fast and frantic, especially in the two or four player link-up mode."



CRASH BANDICOOT: WARPED

Sony's platform hero Crash is back for yet another excursion into the land of jump and run. Dr. Vortex is back too, and this time he's got his hands on a time machine and is causing all sorts of paradox related troubles. Can Crash save the day in what has turned out to be the most complete and enjoyable of all the Crash Bandicoot games? What do you think?

TOCA 2

The best driving sim ever? Very nearly. TOCA 2 takes last year's Codemasters classic TOCA and gives us more tracks, more cars and more excitement. It faces stiff competition but once you're sucked into the full throttle world of Touring Car racing, you'll find it hard to clamber back out again on page 56.

COOL BOARDERS 3

Take to the slopes for a third time with Sony's immense snowbound racer Cool boarders 3. Is it better than the glitchy Cool boarders 2 though? In a word yes. Find out why on page 70.

62 Music

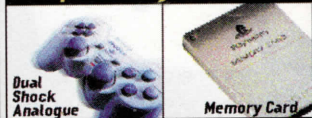
68 Libero Grande



ICONS

Does the game utilise any peripherals: steering wheel, Dual Shock pad, memory card etc.

Compatibility



The Competition

Tommy Raider -
What can I say? If you haven't heard of this, you may just as well stick your head in the sand. The stealth aspects are very similar to those of Tenchu.

Bushido Blade -
The visuals and settings mirror Tenchu, although Bushido Blade's gameplay is much more beat-'em-up oriented.

Bushido Blade -
The visuals and settings mirror Tenchu, although Bushido Blade's gameplay is much more beat-'em-up oriented.

THE COMPETITION

Life is full of choices. Whatever the review score, there may be an alternative to the game in question, and this is where you will find it.

FIRST TEN MINUTES

Do first impressions really count? Is it love at first sight or instant repulsion? Find out here.

First Ten Minutes

Tenchu isn't an instant game in any sense of the word. At first you will probably be a little bored, but soon you'll start to feel sucked into the deathly atmosphere of feudal Japan and the life of a ninja assassin.

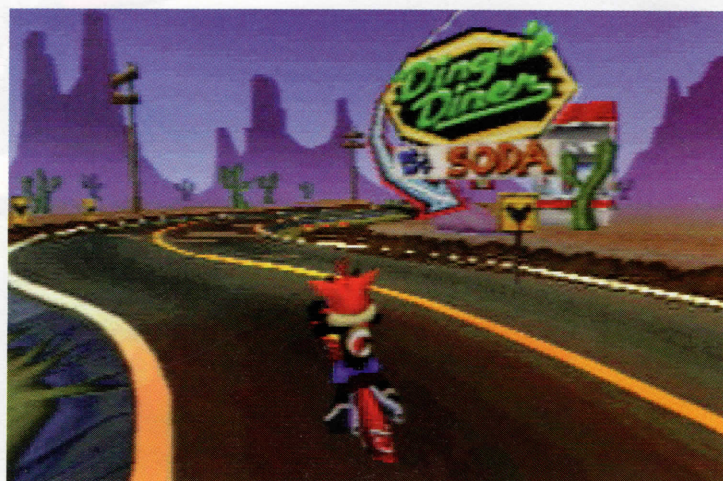
Played and Rated



CRASH BANDICOOT: WARPED

After the disappointment of his second feature and the huge amount of platform competition already stacking the shelves, will anyone actually notice that Crash Bandicoot is back?





He's short, fat and ugly but Nintendo's Italian plumber's impact upon the evolution of videogaming is beyond doubt. Love him or hate him, Mario can argue his sole responsibility for the continuing popularity of the platform genre. Since the release of the ground-breaking Mario Land, the lure of the seemingly simple task of sending an animated character from point A to

B, has proved to be too great a temptation for both home and arcade gamers alike to resist. Instrumental in the success of all Nintendo home systems, Mario has attracted a huge array of imitators, each wanting to capture his platforming crown and of course some of the coinage, he has helped generate. Amongst this endless list of wannabes, only Sega's blue

hedgehog, Sonic and Sony's bizarre flame haired Crash Bandicoot have achieved any kind of greatness.

Although Sony have been quick to distance themselves from any such comparisons with Sega and Nintendo, the success of the Bandicoot has played a lesser, but still worthy, role in persuading platforming punters to move to Sony's console.

Crash Bandicoot: Warped

Publisher: Sony

Developer: Naughty Dog

Release Date: December

Game Type: Platformer

No of Players: One

Price: £34.99

Compatibility



Sub-Games Played and Rated

For the most part sub-games are used to inject a little variety into a title, but the sheer quality of Warped's bonus inclusions warrant closer inspection:

WAVE RACE CB

The obvious inspiration here is Nintendo's water-bound racer, Wave Race. Featuring a fantastic undulation effect to create the sensation of being on the sea, a variety of stunts and various hazards to contend with, we were left wanting more. Brilliant stuff.



THE ORANGE BARON

Take to the skies, as World War I bi-planes battle it out for precious apples and other airborne fruit. Akin to SCI's equally wacky Frenzy! you just do unto others before they do the same to you. Great graphics and free-roaming movement make this worthy of a couple of goes at least.



CRASH AND BURN

Taking the most basic elements of the genre, these varied motorcycle sections were by far the most popular of all the sub-games, with office bods literally queuing up for a go. Minor fare but tough enough to fuel a one-more-go syndrome, which is recommendation enough.





It's Good, But Not...

The original release, was ill-advisedly timed to arrive in the slip stream of Nintendo's mighty *Mario 64*. As a result it attracted a huge audience and also some harsh criticism.

Having been wowed by the free roaming exploits of the short fat one, many were left distinctly un-impressed by Naughty Dog's blend of traditional side scrolling and pseudo-3D screen action. Coining the tongue in cheek term "2.5D", the game used polygon characters and environments but placed limitations upon the central sprite's freedom of movement, with each level following a pre-determined route. Although all agreed that Mario pretty much kicked Crash's ass, the game still won over a number of critics with its almost retro gameplay and charming visuals.

Having pulled in some huge sales receipts, a sequel, naturally, arrived. Promising much and delivering very little, *Crash Bandicoot 2* was regarded as a let down and another missed opportunity to finally usurp Mario. Still with business as usual, the Bandicoot's huge fan base where happy enough to shell out the quids to spend some more time in his company, and the cash tills chimed another success. Now, with geese getting fat across the nation, Sony once again roll Crash out in an attempt to win the platform vote from the Christmas buyers.

With the unpleasant after-taste of the blatant cash-in – *Crash 2*, still souring our palate, hopes where not high for yet another blast of furry animal platform action. Yet like some heavenly mouthwash, *Crash Bandicoot: Warped* quickly set about cleansing our

gaming taste buds, leaving us fresh and ready for another mouthful of Naughty Dog's colourful platform casserole.

Obviously wanting to distance themselves from the last romp, the overall style of play remains the same but the structure and depth has been improved greatly. The talents of the imported developers of BMG's excellent *Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko*, shines through upon level design and the complexity of their structure. Favouring multiple paths and varying camera →

First Ten Minutes

After the decidedly average sequel, *Naughty Dog* have instantly wiped the slate clean, making us wonder if the bandicoot's third adventure might actually be rather good and all the signs are pointing to yes. The graphics are even better than before and the variety in the level design is promising, let's hope there are some fresh ideas in here too!



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The underwater levels would be a quiet and relaxing experience if it weren't for the fact the entire sea bed is alive with danger; Crash's body slam move returns. It's tricky to perform but once mastered a must to survival; The subtle lighting is the perfect compliment to the aquatic atmosphere.





positioning, switching from a traditional left to right to third-person perspective on numerous occasions, adding a little uncertainty as what one will face when turning the next corner.

Crash, Bang, Wallop.

One of the finest points of the game being the variety of the gameplay itself, possibly an indication of Naughty Dog's plans to increase the Crash franchise. Inspiration seems to

Carry On Mounting Animals

Sadly not a new British smut-fest from Sid James and Co, set around a taxidermists but actually a rather bizarre practice of the average bandicoot. This strange and rather frightening technique is employed, in theory, to hitch a ride upon the back of a poor unsuspecting creature, quickening their progress to the end of a level. Yet examination of the above images reveal a possible darker motive, gaze deep into Crash's eyes. Hmm, must be a very lonely life as a platform hero.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: You access each level via the hub, allowing players to progress at their own pace; that magnificent Bandicoot in his flying machine.

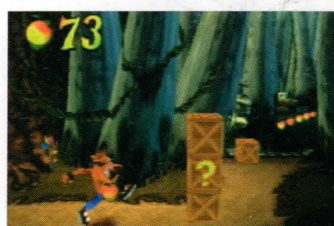
come from such diverse titles as Nintendo's jet-ski racer – *Wave Race 64*, and EA's motorcycle carnage series *Road Rash* for the creation of the many sub-games and bonus sections. The quality of these little genre busting nuggets is made even more satisfying as they are so completely out of context with the rest of the gameplay. Having battled a huge dinosaur, smashed millions of crates, collected gems, emptied the bonus sections of goodies and faced an army of foes, what could be better than getting your feet wet in a fast moving race against the clock upon the back of throbbing jet-ski?

Originality is a factor that rarely comes to the forefront in the software market, least of all in the world of platform games. Yet due to the time-travelling plot, Naughty Dog have the ability to take players to a huge variety of new environments and scenarios, preventing the grey clouds of boredom

from settling in. Sadly though some of the original flaws of *Crash Bandicoot* have been allowed to creep back in, most obvious being the chase sequences. Whilst the programmers have replaced the huge balls of *Indy Jones*, with large monsters instead, the basics remain the same, mess up once and you are a dead marsupial. This is both very frustrating and a great opportunity to blow all your lives, making these few areas a chore, with any replay value squashed accordingly.

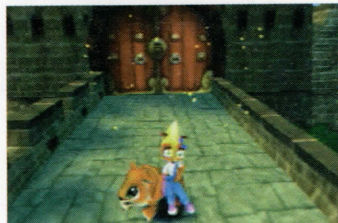
Here Lies The Lifespan.

Niggles done, the majority of the levels are an absolute hoot with a special shout going out to the boss characters. In the past, Crash end-of-level foes have been a little short in the brain cells department, and for the first one or two you encounter in *Warped* the same rules apply. However, their later tooth-bearing counterparts are more than worthy opponents. Beating them comes as a blessed relief,



LEFT: As the path turns, the camera swings into a third-person position: 3D or not 3D? That is the question.





a la the rolling balls levels, but this time for all the right reasons. Serving as more than just an end of level pain, after topping a boss character, the player will be rewarded with a new ability that will prove essential to the next part of their quest. Admittedly the collection of new special moves is a minor inclusion but one that once again adds to the player's growing lust to see what the next areas will hold.

With the core target audience being the youth market, the levels of difficulty have suffered a little, with such hard-core gaming pros as ourselves finding that the challenge is not as tough as we might have hoped.



MAIN: Look out Crash! There's a huge boulder behind you. Er, no sorry, it is in fact a dinosaur, for what ever difference that makes.

Keeping It In The Family

Getting a little long in the tooth, Crash has sought the help of his kid-sister, for this latest adventure. Allow us to introduce you to Miss Coco, skilled in bare-back tiger riding and use of a jet-ski, her favourite colour is orange and she likes videogames and sunsets, and her ambition is to end world hunger. Dear...oh dear.

Thankfully though, in order to complete the game properly, a number of special level gems have to be collected if you want to view the complete end sequence. To obtain them each and every crate must be destroyed, and whilst this is all a little anal for our tastes, it does at least add something to the title's longevity.

Big and Toothy

The graphical pulling power of the series has never be questioned, the comic book visuals give each adventure a unique charm capable of outstripping the majority of its competitors, *Mario 64* included. Even by these high

standards, *Warped* is an absolute beauty; the polygons are solid and clean, without suffering the ill-effects of building or glitching., the texture mapping is rich and detailed, featuring animated layers and some dazzling reflective surfaces and there are a bucket-full of spot effects and incidental animations to give you one of the most impressive visual treats around. Character design must also be highlighted in this list of plus points, with Crash remaining as pleasantly annoying as ever. With a supporting cast ranging from the eponymous hero's worryingly attractive kid sister to a quirky band of camp medieval, frogs eager to smack lips. The animations of this bizarre bunch are amusing and unobtrusive, making it almost worth blowing a life just see the daft outcome. Crash is subjected to such indignities as being cleaved in two, exploding, drowning, being poisoned, molested by rather effeminate royalty and a variety of other demises that would bring a tear to the eye of South Park's Kenny.

Crash Bandicoot: Warped is the game that *Crash 2* should have been. It is colourful, humorous and most importantly good fun. A traditional platformer in next generation trousers *Crash Bandicoot: Warped* works. Re-introducing the player to delights of platform gaming and confirming the reasons why we all fell in love with the genre in the first place.



The Competition

Crash Bandicoot -

The first outing for Sony's answer to Mario, hardly ground-breaking but the product's fantastic visuals and undeniable charm make it hard to fault.



Gex 3D -



BMG's wonderful 3D re-invention of the retro 3DO platformer. Classic gameplay combined with stunning visuals, making an unmissable package for all platform fans.

Pandemonium -

BMG's lavish 2.5D platform adventure contains all the vital ingredients of a genre classic, but sadly lacks the essential gameplay punch to make it so.



Rated by James Gale

STATION

Crash is back, delivering yet another dose of sweet, sweet platform goodies.

- + Numerous sub-games and new gameplay features.
- + Timeless "one more go..." addiction.
- Not the great leap forward we'd all hoped for.
- Lose the annoying boulder chases.

OUT OF 100

86

TOCA 2

TOURING CARS

It's finally here. And the sequel to last year's surprise Codemasters' produced smash hit – TOCA, looks as though it could have *Gran Turismo* backed up in a corner. Can it knock Sony's superlative racer out of its pole position though?

Grinding metal, shattered windscreens and crumpled body panels are just a few things that Sony's *Gran Turismo* fails to give you. TOCA 2 however offers the most literal car-based carnage this side of *Vigilante 8*. Obviously though it's as far away from a car combat game as you could possibly get. This wanton destruction comes from the fact that touring car racing is one of the fastest

and hardest fought motor sports known to man, and class drivers such as Alain Menu and Ricard Rydell think nothing of demolishing fifty grand's worth of factory-produced saloon cars in a few seconds of boisterous 'you'll never get through that gap matey' type of competitive racing.

Capturing this kind of exhilarating, rush-filled action was always going to be a hard job. Luckily, the original

TOCA could act as a successful blueprint as it retained the thrills and spills of the sport, yet still offered a highly playable game on top. TOCA 2 could simply have been an update of this clearly classic driving game. That is if it wasn't for Codemasters deciding to clearly take it upon themselves to drastically improve almost every aspect of the action-packed title.



TOCA 2

Publisher: Codemasters

Developer: In-House

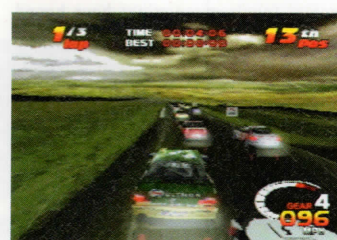
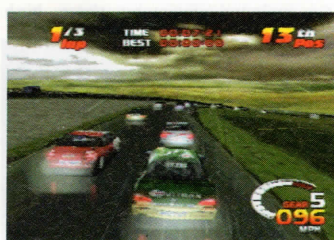
Release Date: Out Now

Game Type: Driving Sim

No of Players: 1-2

Price: £44.99

Compatibility



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The Fiestas may be a little slower than the other powerhouse cars available in TOCA 2 but the racing is just as tight. Even in the gloomy storm-ridden weather you can clearly see the other cars stretching out in front of you.

Testing Times

The test track is a massive area with several different types of track put aside for the sole reason of testing your car. Once on the test track area you can drive to all the different sections which actually serves as an impromptu joy-ride where you whizz around doing whatever you want. The areas range from a banked oval track, to an off-road dirt track and the most useful of all, a skid pan. Here you can practice correcting skids, to hone your style for when you hit the track in a real racing situation.





LEFT TO RIGHT: Formula Ford racing is a whole new kettle of fish when it comes down to control. These things have almost zero downforce meaning that you might as well be driving across ice; there are nine bonus tracks for you to unlock by winning certain races. This one is the first Downtown USA track.



miles an hour off into the distance. The CPU can handle having all the cars on screen at one time, so it's possible to see right up to the leader if you are at the back on a long straight. With so many cars being moved around you'd imagine some kind of glitching or slow-down occurs, but as Codemasters has managed to keep the game as fast and tight as is humanly possible.

Road Thrill

The real thrill on TOCA 2 though, is realising that although you've probably

never raced or driven a touring car, this is about as close a simulation of the sport as you are likely to see. The physics engine used to replicate each car's performance is extremely complex. It's almost as though you can feel the power being forced through the drive-train and onto the track surface where in turn, you can feel the twitches and mini-skids that start your car sailing off in directions other than the one you want to go in. After practice you instinctively know how to correct these distinctive nuances and

adjust them to get your lap times better and to, when all is said and done, keep you in one piece. Getting to this stage of driving skill however will take most gamers an absolute age, but it's only when you have full control over the cars that TOCA 2 really starts to shine.

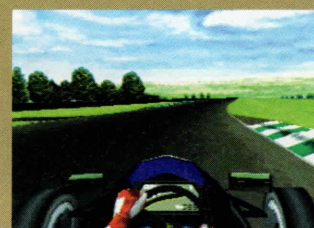
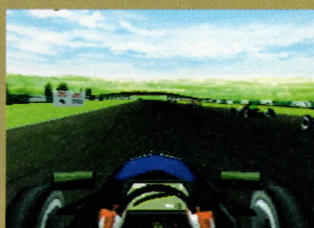
Support Cars

On top of the immense challenge set by simply taming the cars, TOCA 2 also offers a wealth of options that serve to extend the title's life-span. The biggest



Formula Ford

The Formula Ford championship is a very welcome addition to this sequel as it provides a vastly different type of racing action from that on offer in the rest of the game. The traction of these cars is almost non-existent so you have to learn a completely new driving style to stand a chance of getting anywhere in the competition. Which goes for almost all of the other cars in the support classes, but you will have to master the Formula Fords first if you are to get to the rest of them.



Auto Trader



LEFT TO RIGHT: This shot was taken immediately after a head-on impact with a wall (after careering off a cheating Honda). Check out the lack of windscreen due to the impact. If you're in the in-car camera mode, you get to actually see it shatter; the starts can be a very hairy place, especially in the wet.

addition to TOCA though, is the inclusion of the support car championships, which could in themselves be a completely separate game.

The Support Car Championships give you the chance to race a number of the support cars that can often be found at a TOCA weekend, providing entertainment before and after the main Touring Car events. There are seven support car championships to enter, although at the start you can only take part in the Fiesta and Formula Ford races. Win these though and you can gain access to such four-wheeled delights as the TVR Speed 12 and even the Jaguar XJ220.

All of the support car races are held on the usual TOCA tracks but winning races in the main Touring Car event can give you access to an extra nine tracks from all around the world.

Up-To-Date


Because of its official license status, TOCA 2 is bang up-to-date and consequently, includes the new rules and all of the real-life drivers and cars for the current 1998 season. The old rules have in fact, changed quite dramatically from those of last season and therefore the whole competition takes on a different format to its previous outing. Getting used to this though causes no problems and to my mind, the inclusion of the sprint and feature race for each track improves over last year's format anyway.

Tasty Cake

The icing on the cake for TOCA 2 has to be the soundtrack. With near perfect gameplay and visuals you'd expect the sound to have fallen by the wayside but Codemasters have once again hit that

perfect engine note. From the roar of the in-car views, your pit-crew giving you advice and Tiff Needell's well observed introduction and breakdown of each race, the FX are spot on in providing the perfect atmosphere to compliment the on track action.

I think you can probably guess by now that I believe that TOCA 2 is a superb game. In fact, the entire STATION team is unified in the opinion that TOCA 2 is one of the best driving games ever. Okay, so it doesn't have hundreds of cars to choose from but when the selection you have is so cool, who cares? Codemasters have put every effort into bettering the original *TOCA* and in our eyes have been hugely successful.

As far as racing games go, TOCA 2: Touring Cars is as essential, if not more so than Sony's *Gran Turismo* and Codies very own *Colin McRae Rally* – the two best existing racing games. Looks like it's 2-1 to Codemasters then. So just what can Sony do in reply?... 



The Competition

Gran Turismo -

The definitive driving game?

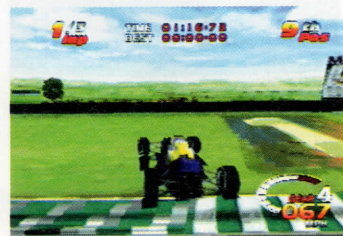


F1 '98 -

A bit of a disappointment but still playable.

TOCA -

Now available on Platinum so still a worthy purchase.



Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION

Easily as essential as Gran Turismo. We have a new benchmark.

- + The most realistic and playable driving engine ever.
- + The challenge and depth on offer here is superb.
- Some dubious draw-in does occur.
- Steep learning curve will put weak minds off.

OUT OF 100

95

COLONY WARS: VENGEANCE

Bigger, better, brighter? Can the sequel to last year's Colony Wars improve on the stunning looks of its predecessor? Take a look for yourself...

CW: Vengeance

Publisher: Psygnosis

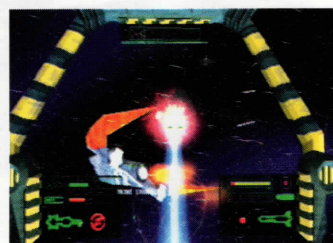
Developer: In-house

Release Date: Out now

Game Type: Space Opera

No of Players: One

Price: £39.99



The power of the PlayStation is very rarely harnessed and used to its full gob-smacking potential. However, Psygnosis' *Colony Wars*, was one of the few games that really offered the grade 'A' eye candy that the PlayStation, in the right hands, is capable of providing. The sequel, *Colony Wars: Vengeance*, could have simply been a whole new set of missions then, seeing as the original game already had a strong following that though it looked better than Emma Noble wrapped in a £10.00 drinking voucher. Psygnosis haven't been slothfully resting on their laurels



though, because *Colony Wars: Vengeance* turns out to be even more visually powerful than its predecessor.

A bold statement but if you witness the combination of awe-inspiring backgrounds, fierce, John Woo type explosions and some of the most amazing spacecraft ever to grace a home platform, you too will agree that *Colony Wars: Vengeance* represents a graphical leap that leaves it clearly light years ahead of the original.

In this sequel everything is far more defined, and although the vehicles are chunkier, more detailed and ultimately



better looking, there is still a certain amount of lost polygons when you get too close to some of them. A minor point though, when the overall atmosphere created by the graphical brilliance of the title is by far the most involving and realistic (I use the term loosely) that I have ever come across on this style of game. And thankfully, it's backed up by a level of gameplay that just about delivers the goods.

Role Reversal

Aside from the graphical improvement though, *Colony Wars: Vengeance* offers

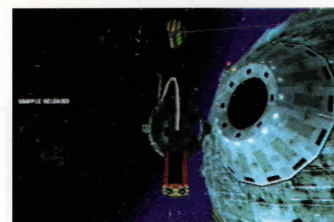
First Ten Minutes

Another excellent Psygnosis rendered intro offers you a short and concise history of what went on in the original *Colony Wars* game. After the main intro, you're shown the mission briefing screen, which although long-winded is very well produced. It can be skipped if you want to. As for the game itself, the first ten minutes play are spent with your jaw on the floor.

Compatibility



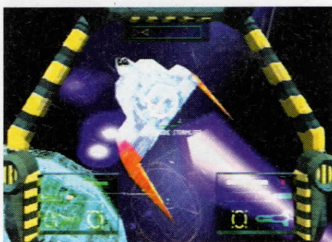
CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN: Trying to tow energy pods over to the Death Star style space platform whilst being bombarded by enemy fire is an honest but thankless toil; personally I prefer to explore the many exciting possibilities offered by space-bound inverted nipples; pass the space forceps please...





Ground Control

On certain missions *Colony Wars: Vengeance* takes the battle away from the vast expanse of space and puts it onto the planet surface. This adds a new element to the proceedings, in that you have to avoid crashing into the ground. These planet-based missions take away some of the repetitive aspects of the gameplay and although they look stunning at times, there is a certain amount of draw-in on the scenery. The fogging however, which is usually slated in most games actually adds to the ambience of these levels, so I wonder why they didn't use more of it to mask that draw-in. Oh well.



no real gameplay innovations over the original *Colony Wars*, although the storyline has been turned on its head. You now play the role of a pilot who fights for Kron. As descendants of the Navy who were actually the bad guys in the first game, you have to defeat the League Of Free Worlds who have oppressed your race for hundreds of years, after their glorious victory last time out.

The mix of combat action and more structured escort, reconnaissance, and specific task missions stays the same though, and whilst this offers a thoroughly in-depth experience, you are often left cold by the repetitive nature of some of the missions. This repetition is saved though by the superb game engine. The space-bound action is by far the most elegant, and sophisticated ever to grace the PlayStation. Like the original the way you play *Colony Wars: Vengeance* means that unlike most other games that involve air/space bound dog-

fighting, you can actually follow your target around without losing sight of it on the first fly-by. This makes for some highly involving cat and mouse style gameplay, which of course, is helped by the fantastic graphics.

Against the odds?

All of the ships skate about the heavens with the grace of a futuristic Torvil & Dean, so players have to employ silky smooth piloting skills to go up against the throng of enemy fighters and vehicles dispatched to blow them to space dust. This is in fact easier done than said.

Taking control of your fighter is not a difficult task but don't think that this makes the game a pushover – although it does seem that your ship is usually better equipped, faster and stronger than anything the League can throw at you. But it's a well matched advantage when you see the odds that you're up against. And even with the devastating new weaponry at your disposal you still

can't simply fire off everything at will – success depends upon using the right weapons at the right time.

Colony Wars: Vengeance won't be the biggest game this Christmas, but it is however one of the best looking. Whilst extended exposure throws light onto the game's biggest flaw though; *Colony Wars: Vengeance* is just a little too repetitive. The pros however, far outweigh the cons, and *Colony Wars: Vengeance* proves to be one of the better games to consider slapping into your PlayStation this Christmas. Looks aren't everything I know but when a game also possesses the personality to keep you engaged in the space opera shenanigans for a period worthy of the purchase price, you know you are on to a winner!



The Competition

Blast Radius -

Superb full-on action blaster. Just don't expect to be sucked in by the depth of the gameplay.



Darklight Conflict -

Great looking game with absolutely no substance.



Xenocracy -

One of the worst Space Opera style games we've ever played. Steer clear.



Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION	+ Some of the best visuals yet to grace the PlayStation. + Gameplay keeps you hooked for hours at a time.	OUT OF 100
Repetitive? Well yes, but it's visually stunning and draws you in – like a classy hooker.	- Some of the difficulty settings are a bit dubious. - The draw-in on planet based levels is ugly.	88

MUSIC

'If music be the food of love, play on'. Whether or not Codemasters' new sequencing program, cunningly entitled Music, can help you become irresistible to the opposite sex has yet to be established. But all women love a good song and a DJ...don't they?



LEFT TO RIGHT: The small screen on the left hand side of the screenshot, displays the visual accompaniment for your techno masterpiece; although the screenshots make things look a little dull, the quality of the package is stunning.



Music

Publisher: Codemasters

Developer: Jester Interactive

Release Date: Out Now

Game Type: Music Creator

No of Players: One

Price: £34.99

Compatibility



A mass of writhing, semi-naked bodies, lost in the euphoric sounds of a DJ spinning a seamless set, may be a familiar way of spending a Friday or Saturday night for the majority of the nation's club-goers. Yet in recent years, amongst the bouncing population of club land, a grey stranger has lurked, blissfully out of place yet strangely welcome, transporting onlookers to bizarre far away worlds, where the only limitation is the imagination. I'm talking about the PlayStation of course. Since its

early adoption by the Ministry of Sound, PlayStations have become a familiar part of club culture. Dark corners have been brought to life by queuing masses, eager to take on the might of Tekken or break standing lap times on Gran Turismo. Yet the links between the Sony hardware and the dance music industry run much deeper. From sponsorship of key musical events to the use of respected artists to work their magic upon game scores, the two mediums have continued the compliment one another over the years.

Recent months have seen the release of two titles that were created with the club goer in mind. Sony's virtual eight track, *Fluid* and to a lesser extent their V-CD music to light show, *Baby Universe*, took both the gamer and the console into new territory.

To The Beat of the Drum

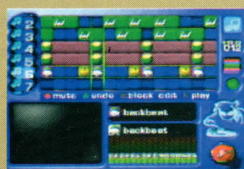
Exploiting the woefully neglected multimedia capabilities of the PlayStation, *Fluid* enabled the player to create their own tunes. Crossing several genres, the package initially held much interest, yet

Back to Basics.

Making sweet music is not as hard as it may sound.



Lay down the baseline.



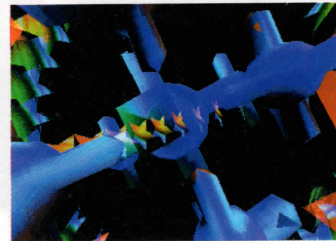
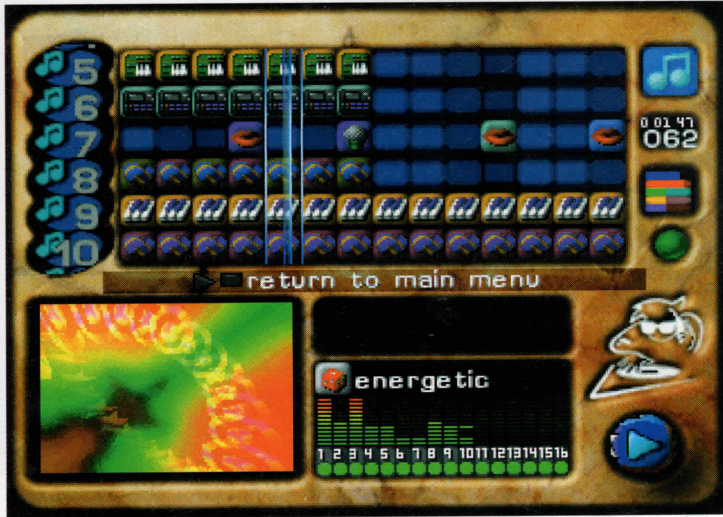
Add some drums.



Add a few samples.



Bingo, it's as simple as that.



CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN: The video editor is a nice touch but nothing to get excited about. Mastering the riff editor is a must, the possibilities here are near limitless; the video editor is simple but a welcome addition and can be quite fun.

the limitations imposed upon the player proved fatal to its lifespan. Left feeling wanting by what was little more than a virtual eight track sampler and quick dip with *Flipper*, the disappointment of *Fluid* can now be put behind us, thanks to the memory erasing power of Codemasters' excellent studio sequencer, simply entitled *Music*.

Removing the pretense of Sony's earlier attempts, and all traces of sub aquatic shenanigans, developers Jester Interactive have produced a no nonsense exercise in creativity. Covering both visuals and sound, the user can create an incredibly diverse range of musical styles alongside a running cyberdelia styled video sequence. The visual elements are an interesting addition, but the main

focus of this program is undoubtedly on the music itself, featuring an array of samples from the stables of dance genres like Drum and Bass, House, Trip Hop and Ambient for use on a basic, yet practical sequencer.

Following a basic four, four array, the seemingly tricky task of blending various samples to craft a toe tapper, becomes child's play. Able to jump from one style to another, the user is not limited to producing a heavy on the cheese, straight forward Trip Hop House tune, but instead can develop a hybrid of all styles. Once the various effects, drums, vocals, percussion etc have been selected, they can be placed upon the multi-layered sampler and played in a chosen sequence.

Bang. Bang... Bang.

With 18 channels and more than 500 samples, any potential musician would be well catered for, yet the true scope of the game is still hardly touched upon.

Each sample can be altered. For example, a suitably subtle organ riff can be made into a pulsing piece of sub base, by changing the instrument that's playing the sample. With over 100 instruments and editing tools, each riff can be totally redesigned, or erased and started again from scratch. With the user blessed with the ability to make up their own samples, the possibilities are infinite. The sheer quality of the sounds that can then be developed and perfected bears comparison with many of the nation's current dance floor-fillers.

The cost of such perfection is time. Having provided the beginner with enough material to hook their interest initially, these more complex operations require far more care and a more in-depth knowledge of the title. For example, the creation of personalised riffs is both time-consuming and downright annoying, yet the tangible results of this effort and perseverance are a fitting reward in themselves.

Although *Music* is unlikely to attract a vast fan base, the nature of the title limiting the audience to only a specialist group, those PlayStation owners that fit the necessary parameters will be enthralled. *Music* is a comprehensive and groundbreaking addition to the broad-minded's software library.



MUSIC
music creation for the PlayStation

First Ten Minutes

The impressive range of pre-stored samples and the simplistic style of the sequencer, allows the player to craft a reasonable tune within minutes. Yet unlike *Fluid*, the baffling sound options promise that much more lurks beneath the surface. I'm pretty much sold on this already.

The Competition

Fluid -

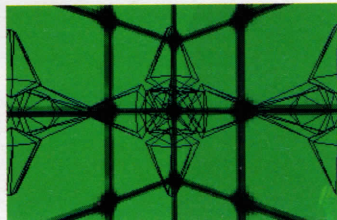
Sony's user friendly approach to music making, is complimented by an excellent presentation shell and visuals but is sorely lacking in options, placing a huge limitation upon the musical range.

Spice World -

The formerly fab five unleashed in their first and probably last PlayStation release. This ill-conceived pseudo-multimedia experience is cursed by the game engine's complete lack of merit.

Baby Universe -

A music to light show that is the perfect compliment to a drug fuelled end of evening chill out, but that's all folks and at 30 notes a throw it's hard to recommend.



STATION

A comprehensive and rewarding adventure into dance music.

- + Huge variety of musical styles.
- + Near limitless possibilities.
- Very time consuming.
- A little more complex than is needed.

Rated by James Gale

OUT OF 100

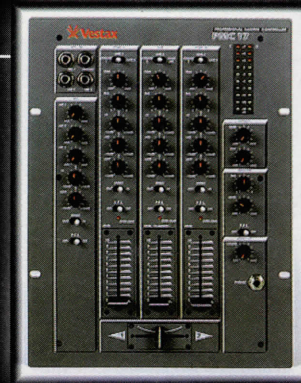
90

Competition



YO YO, WHAT'S UP?

Fancy yourself as the next Carl Cox or Dave Angel? Want to embark upon a career as the latest dance sensation? Well Codemasters are offering you the chance to do just that. To mark the release of their excellent dance toon creator, *Music*, the Codie boys have been kind enough to come up with the following prizes...



CODEMAST GUESS

1ST PRIZE

2 x Technics SL1210 record decks
Vestax PMC 17a mixer
Denon PMA250se Amplifier
& JBL control 1 Speakers

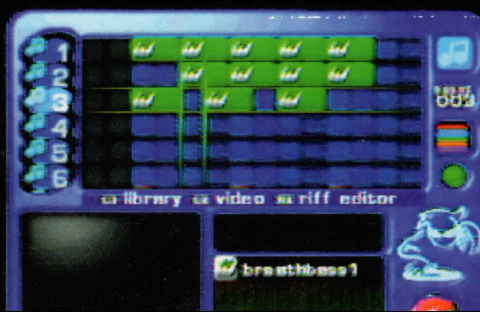


2ND PRIZE

Denon PMA250se Amplifier
& JBL control 1 Speakers

RUNNERS UP

10 Music T-Shirts





ERS MUSIC WAY!

If you want to tear it up like a used lottery ticket, on the wheels of steel, simply answer the following questions:

1. ROCKAFELLER SKANK, GANGSTER TRIPPING AND YOU'VE COME ALONG WAY, BABY ARE ALL TITLES OF WHICH ARTIST'S PRODUCTIONS?

- a. Potbelly Jim
- b. Fatboy Slim
- c. Bloaterbloke Tim

2. WHO WROTE THE MASSIVE SUMMER ANTHEM MUSIC SOUNDS BETTER WITH YOU?

- a. Starship
- b. Deathstar
- c. Stardust

3. COLD STORAGE, PRODUCER OF MUSIC THE GAME, SUPPLIED MUSIC FOR WHICH CLOTHING COMPANY'S RECENT COMMERCIALS?

- a. Gap
- b. Burger King
- c. MacDonalds

Put your answers on a postcard or sealed envelope, clearly marked "It's All Gone Pete Tong Compo" and send them to the following address, and who knows the winner could be you:

STATION.
Rapide Publishing,
1 Roman Court,
48 New North Road,
Exeter.
EX4 4EP



**KEEP IT
100% REAL!**



ACTUA GOLF 3

It's very rare that a golf game attempts to break the mould but Actua's third outing for the Actua Golf series has done just that. Find out why...

Actua Golf 3

Publisher: Gremlin

Developer: Actua Sports

Release Date: Out now

Game Type: Golf Sim.

No of Players: 1-4

Price: £39.99



First Ten Minutes

After their first drive anybody with an ounce of interest in golf games will be astounded, because the new analog control method actually works. Get to your first green though, and you may have changed your mind already. Give it a little more time though.

The Competition

Everybody's Golf -

Some say the best Golf game on the PlayStation. I say "poo chute".



Actua Golf 2 -

A serious golf game with only a few minor flaws.



PGA Golf -

About the same as Actua Golf 2.



Compatibility



It is written that every golf game must conform

to a carved-in-stone control method, and until now, developers and publishers alike have been too scared, or too lazy to attempt something a little different. Actua Sports were among those guilty with their standard, but very playable Actua Golf 1 & 2 but like any band's difficult 3rd album, they have had to go for something a little different for their third golf game. Unlike most third albums though, Actua Golf 3 hasn't turned out to be an obscure and unplayable mess. In fact it's totally the opposite.

Analog Golfing

On the face of things Actua Golf 3 appears to be no more than your standard golf game. This would be true, if it wasn't for the new control system that's been implemented which makes use of both the digital and analog pads. The digital pad changes the direction of the shot and the right hand analog stick controls where you strike the ball, which affects the draw, fade and distance of the shot. The real innovation though is in using the left hand analog to take your shot. Draw back on it to swing backwards, then push it forward to swing through the ball. The analog pad actually senses how fast you have pulled the stick back and pushed it forward to measure the power for your shot. This method of control is incredibly easy to get into for long shots but it can

be tough when you're near to the green. Persevere though, and you get immense satisfaction from it.

Caddyshack

As well as this new control method, Actua Golf 3 offers a great looking, intensely addictive and complete game of golf - for which you get eight different courses to play on and twelve different types of play. You can try

anything from strokeplay to golf against the clock, play a roster of real-life professional golfers, or even take the option to create your own competitor.

The overall lush feel, superb atmospheric sound effects, commentary and crowd noises add the finishing touches to what has to be the best golfing game on the PlayStation. So why isn't it getting a 90% plus score then? Well, it's a golf game innit. **G**



ABOVE: On the driving range you can compete against another player in a bid to hit the ball both the longest distance and closest to the targets.

Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION	The most innovative and probably the best golf game available on PlayStation.	+ Excellent new control method. + Contains real-life players to please the golf fans. - It's a golf game. - Loading times.	OUT OF 100 85

Ryan Hughes at DeWitt

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LIBERO GRANDE

'Big Freedom'; sounds like a dodgy four piece boy band, but it's actually the English translation of Libero Grande, the title of Sony's unique entry into the football games market. Does the game live up to the grand claims of it's title though? STATION investigates...



Rather than ignore the tides of change, Sony have taken it upon themselves to give football supporters what they want; A football game with a difference.

Libero Grande sets you in the role of one single player whilst the CPU takes care of the rest of your team, unlike traditional games where you have control of the whole team. Before you scorn what on paper does sound like a ridiculous idea though, I suggest you read on and give Libero Grande the chance it deserves.

World Class

The first sign that Libero Grande offers a different angle on the tired football games genre is that before picking a team, you have to pick a player. Each of the twenty world class players is rated on speed, shot power and skill, and you will notice a few similarities to real-life soccer stars. Well more than a few similarities actually; Alfred Shaffer is a spitting image of, you

guessed it - Alan Shearer, and Raimundo could easily pass off as Ronaldo's twin. That's right, he looks almost as ugly as something out of an episode of the X Files.

Winning the International Cup and World League gives you access to even more wannabe real-life players, which gives the game a pseudo beat-'em-up 'gotta win to get the hidden characters' compulsive gameplay element. Choosing your player first means that you can then place him into any one of 32 international teams. So if you've ever fancied watching a Shearer look-a-like playing for Germany, now's your chance.



Big Freedom

Taking control of just the one player means that you can do as you like with him for the duration of the match, which is where the Libero Grande title comes in. You generally find that your player starts in a midfield position but you're actively encouraged to make surging runs forward by your team mates, as well as get back and defend when the pressure is on. It's because you have to be jack of all trades that Libero Grande proves to be as exciting as it is. It may not be realistic; it's not often you see one player covering all the space on the pitch like a blue arsed fly with a firework up its Gary; but it certainly makes for a great game of soccer.



Libero Grande

Publisher: Sony

Developer: Namco

Release Date: Nov'99

Game Type: Football Sim.

No of Players: 1-2

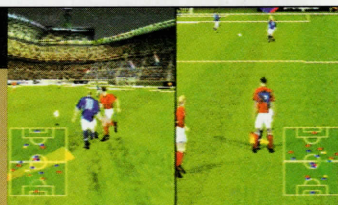
Price: £34.99

Compatibility



Split-Screen Soccer

Because you are only in control of one player, two-player games have to be played in split-screen mode. This takes some getting used to but after a while it becomes second nature. It does however lose a little speed at times but this is forgivable when you can have this much footy fun.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Sliding tackles aren't the only way to rid the opposition of the ball but they do look pretty spectacular; the action replays cover all conceivable angles, allowing you to watch the performance of the rest of the team, as well as yourself; the position of the camera makes it so that your player is very deep into the screens. This makes it easier to catch players coming at you from many different angles; hmm, familiar face, bit of an odd name though; when you take a free kick or corner you have to position the strike point on the ball. This way it is possible to put the exact curve and power into the strike that you require.

Intelligent Football Players?

Of course, for all of this to work the other ten men on your team have to have a good level of artificial intelligence, to keep up with the one human-controlled. And to a degree they have. There's no CPU Georgie Bests or virtual Peles to help you along but the rest of the team are competent enough to get the plays running smoothly and the goals going in. The CPU players aren't actually left to their own devices though, as you can order a shot or a pass at will. This allows you to take over when you feel that the

skill of your other players isn't up to scratch. Once you've tamed this new style of control, you will find that Libero Grande becomes one of the most playable and enjoyable football games around. It will however take you a long time to get used to it, so don't give up.

Lost Ball

The most unsettling aspect of Libero Grande is that, given that you only have

control over one player, the ball is often off screen, elsewhere on the pitch. The

camera does a decent enough

job of panning out to

give you a good view

of the pitch but it's

inevitable that the

ball is lost on

occasion. Not that this

would come as any great

surprise for the majority of

player's in my local side. They

seem to spend the whole game in

this bewildering state of blissful

ignorance. Apart from this, the visuals

on the whole are near perfect. Large

chunky players, massive atmospheric

stadiums and some of the smoothest

animation we've ever witnessed make

Libero Grande a pleasure both to play and

watch on screen. Initially the animation

gives the feeling of being a little slow but

once adjusted to it, Libero Grande is just as

fast and frantic as the best football games

on the market today.

The collective STATION hat goes off

to Namco and Sony for daring to release

such a radical take on the nation's

favourite game. Luckily, the bravado of

both companies has paid off. It was

always going to be a thin line between

success and complete failure but Libero

Grande, the soccer game with a

difference falls well beyond the success

side of the line. It's just up to you now,

are you ready to express yourself? **S**

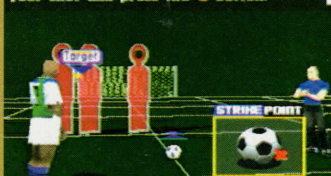
Player Challenge

The Player Challenge is a good way to practice the skills you need to be successful on Libero Grande. You're basically set nine, skill-based challenges that can be anything from dribbling around cones to set piece free kicks. Each event has a qualification score that has to be beaten earning points in a number of different areas such as accuracy and speed. This makes for the perfect training ground, but the best fun is when you get some mates round and you can lay down the gauntlet for them to try to beat your scores.

Compete for the fastest time by skillfully dribbling the ball around the red cones.



Adjust the strike point to add curve to your shot and press the O button.



First Ten Minutes

You'll hardly get a touch of the ball - let alone score any goals within the first ten minutes of playing. Actually it goes like this for the first few hours because the learning curve is so steep. Once cracked though, Libero Grande becomes as playable as the best soccer games around today.

The Competition

Fifa 99 -

Could quite possibly be the best football game ever.

Actua Soccer 3 -

Could quite possibly be the best football game ever.

Viva Football -

Could quite possibly be the best football game ever. And so on...

Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION

At last a football game that dares to be different, and actually succeeds.

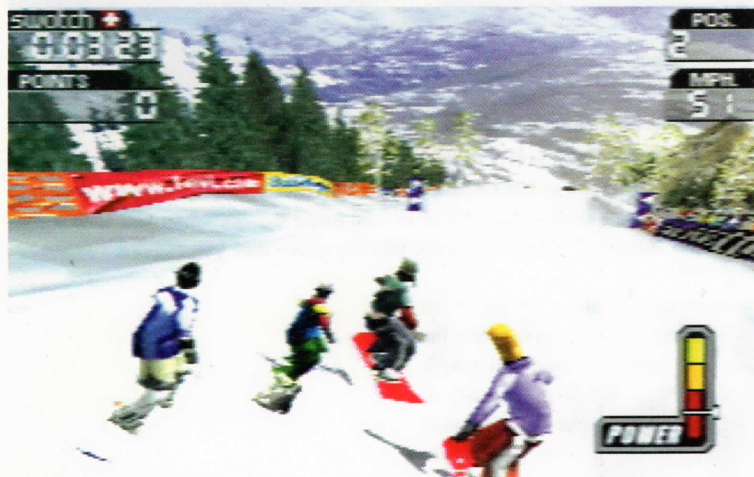
- + Completely unique and original.
- + Two player split-screen soccer actually works.
- Computer controlled players are second rate.
- Controls aren't as responsive as they should be.

OUT OF 100

89

COOL BOA

Games Journalist Challenge no. 1: Review a snowboarding game without mentioning the words 'wicked', 'radical', 'gnarly' or 'dude', at all. Impossible...



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The start of a race can often be very hectic. If you can't get ahead in the first few seconds you have to resort to this new tactic of punching your opponent in the head; many of the jumps launch you over perilous rock filled chasms. Just like the real thing then. Nutters!



Cool Boarders 3

Publisher: SCEE

Developer: 989 Studios/Idol Minds

Release Date: Out now

Game Type: Snowboard Sim.

No of Players: 1-2

Price: £34.99

Snowboarding, (perhaps the coolest sport on earth),

has had a healthy representation on the PlayStation with one game standing out as by far the best – *Cool Boarders 2*. It's not without problems though, especially in the graphical department. Have Sony rectified this with *Cool Boarders 3* then? In a word, yes.

The improvements in *Cool Boarders 3* over its predecessor aren't simply in the visual stakes though, they're in almost every single area of the game; it's more playable, it's far more challenging, it looks better, and there's far more to it. Regrettably, the music retains an ear-splitting and mind-numbing non-quality worthy of a whacked out Van Halen, but aside from this rock nightmare, *Cool Boarders 3* excels in every other department.

White Lines

If you've played *Cool Boarders 2*, you know that no matter how playable it was, the lack of graphical prowess shown by the developers was enough to mar your overall enjoyment of the playing experience. Some of the glitching, especially in the scenery and joins in the snow was unforgivable; even the final

code of the game looked as though it was in the early stages of development. Thankfully 989 Studios and Idol Minds have got their act together for *Cool Boarders 3* though. Gone are the lines in the snow, gone are the missing sections of scenery and gone are the dodgy looking board riders. This is all replaced by gorgeous rendered slopes with more humps, bumps and jumps than a Super-cross track, scenery that offers challenging gameplay as well as looking impressive and riders that could almost, but not quite, be real...maan! Improvements that

add an overall atmosphere to the alpine slopes that *Cool Boarders 2* never had.

Addicted

It also means that the highly addictive, challenging and down right frustrating gameplay from *Cool Boarders 2* can finally be appreciated in all its glory. Winging down icy slopes at great speed, attached to a piece of fibreglass has never been more exciting or hair-raising on the Playstation than in *Cool Boarders 3*. Pulling air out of the smallest of humps to the largest of man made jumps offers real satisfaction,

Smokin'

The half-pipe section of the game is the perfect opportunity to witness some of the best stunts that the *Cool boarders 3* crew can perform. Of course, before you can witness them you'll have to learn them, which will take, an absolute age. The half-pipe's a perfect training ground for stunts and tricks, so head straight there if you want to break records in the rest of the game.



Compatibility



COOL BOARDERS 3



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Rail sliding is incredibly easy but very impressive. Simply hit the triangle button as you approach the rail and you automatically slide across it; you have to see the stunts in action to believe how cool they actually look. The animation is smooth and the sheer spectacle of some of the manoeuvres is stunning.

especially when you get to grips with the death-defying stunts and tricks at your disposal. I must stress though, that it is now much harder to pull off the stunts as the developers have taken it on themselves to change the system from the last game. Why, well I don't know, because this was one area that was absolutely perfect in *Cool Boarders 2*. In fact the operation of the stunts is the only criticism of *Cool Boarders 3* that I really have. Oh, that and the terrible music. You will eventually feel at ease with the new stunt system but why did they change a winning system?

Want More?

In true sequel style, *Cool Boarders 3* contains more of everything than the last game. There are more tracks, more riders and more snowboards to choose from. New

events aren't simply tacked on, they form an integral part of the whole package. The first new event, Boarder Cross, pits you against three other riders on a short course with flag gates that have to be passed to avoid gaining penalty points. Boarder Cross provides some very close racing due to the fact that the course is short and the racers don't have time to spread out, unlike the longer downhill races. The second new event, the slalom, is tougher still. It's just you and one other rider on a dual slalom course. There's no contact, simply choose the best line and get down that slope faster than your opponent. Putting these new events and the existing Downhill, Big Air, Slope Style and Half Pipe events into a tournament provides the ultimate challenge, so don't expect to be completing *Cool Boarders 3* for quite some time.

A license to be lazy

Many games claim to be true sequels when they are only minor updates, yet still people buy them in droves. The world of sequels is often an excuse for publishing houses and development teams to sit back on their laurels and become a little lazy, but *Cool Boarders 3* is one of few sequels actually deserves to be called such. The amount of effort gone into improving on its predecessors is highly commendable, and the result is a game finally worthy of the sport of snowboarding. The graphical improvements are more than we expected, the gameplay tweaks weren't needed, but are mostly welcome, and the new tracks are more radical than the Peoples Front Of Judeah. Add to this a gnarly pack of riders and snowboards and *Cool Boarders 3* becomes one of the most wicked games the PlayStation has ever seen, dude. So much for Game Journalists Challenge no. 1...

First Ten Minutes

If you've played the original game you will be amazed at how much *Cool Boarders 3* has improved upon it. In the first ten minutes of play you'll notice the smoother, faster and all round general graphical improvements that *Cool Boarders 2* needed so badly.

The Competition

Cool Boarders 2 -

Superbly playable romp in the snow, let down only by shoddy visuals.

Snow Racer -

Ocean's attempt at combining both skiing and snowboarding was worthy. But in no way a winner.

Chill -

I'd rather watch the paint dry whilst eating a bowl of raw liver than play this.

Rated by Saul Trewern



LEFT AND RIGHT: As in real life, the weather plays an important part in the game. When it snows visibility is dramatically reduced, meaning that you have to react quickly when you finally do see the jump or obstacle.

STATION

The best snowboarding game ever!

- + A wealth of improvements over *Cool Boarders 2*.
- + Lots of different events to try your hand at.
- The stunts system has been needlessly changed.
- Some of the AI is suspect.

OUT OF 100

90



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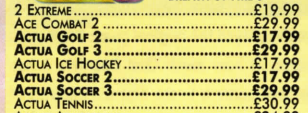
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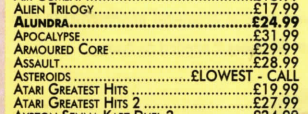
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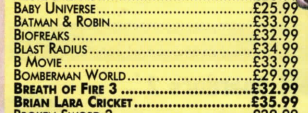
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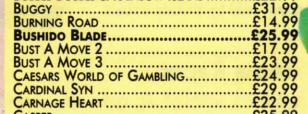
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BREATH OF FIRE 3



2 EXTREME



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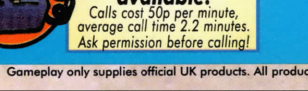
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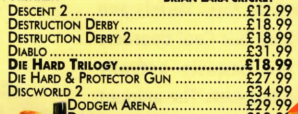


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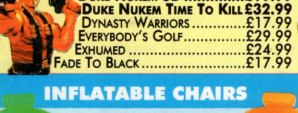
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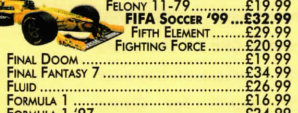
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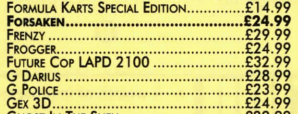
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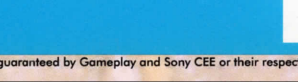
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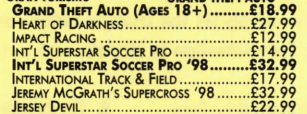
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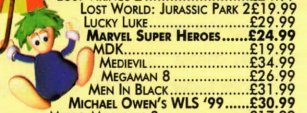
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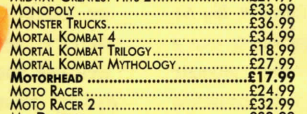
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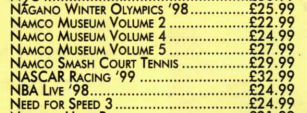
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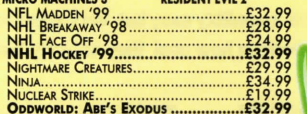
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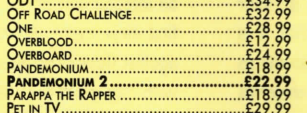
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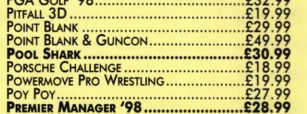
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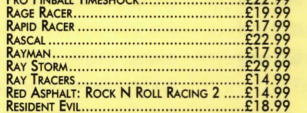
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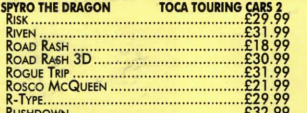
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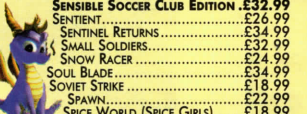
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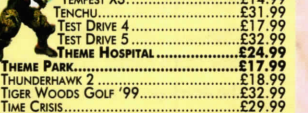
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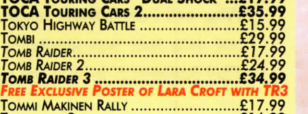
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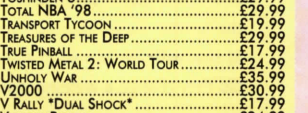
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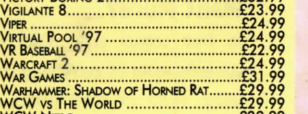
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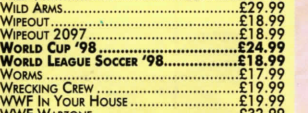
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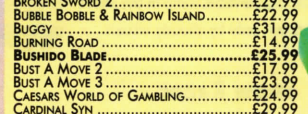
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2 EXTREME



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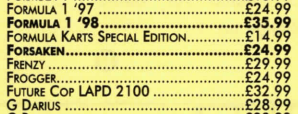
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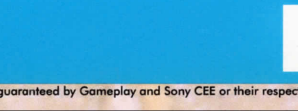
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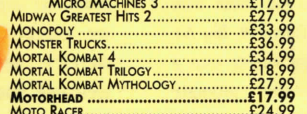
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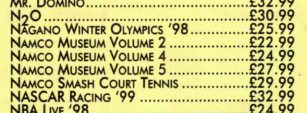
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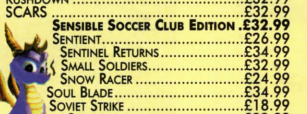
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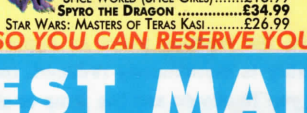
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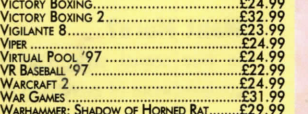
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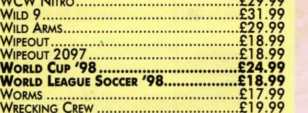
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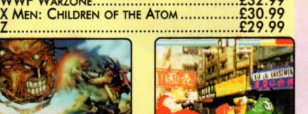
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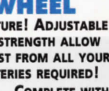
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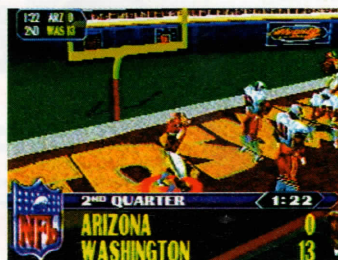


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NFL BLITZ

Having endured over five long years of John Madden in his various console incarnations, GT Interactive finally delivers a NFL football game that is easy to play, doesn't come with a manual of biblical proportions and most shocking of all, is ruddy good fun.



NFL Blitz

Publisher: GT Interactive

Developer: Midway

Release Date: Out now

Game Type: NFL Sim.

No of Players: 1-4

Price: £39.99



Who cares about the NFL?

Having filled the shelves with countless releases, each one squarely aimed at a US audience, with the knock-on effect for European audiences of making the action as impenetrable as a nun with a headache. Having grown up following our national sport of soccer, (no, make that REAL football), to be confronted by such a confusing game with its array of plays, tactics and generally mind-blowing options, makes it all too easy to overlook such a bewildering sport and take the easy option of returning to rather more familiar territories.

Ironically enough, as the flagging UK interest in the sport reaches rock bottom, Midway now delivers what we can only

judge as one of the best NFL titles yet. From the creators of the classic *NBA Jam*, NFL Blitz favours a more arcade styled approach. Gone are all the frightening option screens, the weighty instruction manual and incomprehensible array of offensive and defensive stat screens. In their place stands a grid iron cousin of *NBA Jam* combining the basics of the sport with pick up and play ease of use.

Fourth Down and Four

Once past the bone-breaking FMV sequence, Midway's trademark presentation takes the player by the hand and gently introduces them to the game itself. Rather reminiscent of their basketball series, the option screens throw-up rendered cheer leaders, helpful gameplay tips and the general know-how needed to help carry you to

Bone Breaking Realism.

When you put a huge group of massive blokes, with equal amounts of adrenaline and raw aggression pumping through their veins, in a confined space for a couple of hours, accidents will happen. NFL Blitz takes these violent aspects and magnifies them. When a running player has been downed, the opposition has one of four options open to them, jump on them, body slam them, tap dance on the back of their head or help them to their feet. Which do you prefer?



ABOVE: Every team and every player. — the benefits of an official license.

Compatibility





CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN: The extra point field goal is taken for you, which is a little odd, not to mention very disappointing; the camera angles can be altered but the default remains the best of the bunch; presentation and front end design smacks of Midway's previous sporting ventures.

the end zone. With its full endorsement by the NFL, NFL Blitz contains all 30 statistically correct teams and players, loyal fans will undoubtedly be a little concerned with what Midway has done to their favourite sport. Yet those not familiar with tossing the old pig skin, will appreciate this simplified introduction to the game.

With only 18 offensive and nine defensive plays, the usual sense of being completely overwhelmed with meaningless play over-views is removed, and instead delivered in bite-sized chunks. The simplified approach logically speeds up the learning process, as with only a few options the player will soon gain the essential know-how and will thus be tossing like a pro in a matter of minutes.

The most publicised flaw of NFL football is the fragmented flow of the game. Naturally, this quibble has plagued every videogame translation of

the sport: the constant stopping and starting leaves the more action-hungry players both frustrated and bored. Combating the above, Midway have adopted a truly arcade approach, limiting the player to a mere 15 seconds between plays to choose their next tactic.

The Quarterback is Toast.

Although many will argue that this will limit their tactical strategies, the imposition of a timer successfully increases the pace of the action and limits any opportunities for boredom to creep in. Further liberties have also been taken with the basic rules. For example, players must now take

over 30 yards, instead of the usual ten per down, failure to do so will result in a turnover to the opponent,

forcing things to move up a gear nicely. The animation and abilities of the sprites is completely overblown, each play sees a virtual riot erupt, as rivals and team mates alike take to the air, body check and crunch back to earth. Once again, another welcome breath of fresh air.

Without a doubt, the real feather in Blitz's cap lies in the sheer spectacle of the game. Players beat one another to ground to the accompaniment of bone snapping impact sonics, and the camera floats gracefully to give a close up of the carnage as a rousing musical score springs to life. Admittedly the gameplay is a little removed from reality but the overall presentation reflects the razzmatazz of a televised event far more than any of its more factual counterparts.

In a bizarre twist, NFL Blitz is better suited to those readers who have had only limited exposure to the sport, as the lack of depth and arcade styled playability will upset the budding John Maddens' of the world. Definitely worth a look, especially if you don't like the sport.

Er, does that make any sense?

First Ten Minutes

Hold up there! An American football game that is instantly playable? Do my eyes deceive me? Well, the variety of plays are simple and, as shocking as it may sound, easy to execute. NFL games have almost always been little more than a baffling ordeal for this scribe, which probably goes some way to explain why I'm lovin' this... "36, 24, 36 hut, hut!"

The Competition

NFL Extreme -

Sony's latest grid iron foray has all the options of Madden, polished visuals and a sense of humour, but moves at the same pace as a garden snail nailed to a plank of wood.

Madden '99 -

A further update to the long running series, enhanced visuals, increased plays and an official endorsement from the increasingly tubby NFL guru make this a must for hardcore fans

NFL Quarterback Club -

Acclaim's attempt at adding a little variety to the tired NFL simulation, fails to elevate this above the competition. Arcade friendly but fails to rack up the big points.



ABOVE: First down and 30' Thankfully, this is not as daunting as it may sound.

STATION

Shallow but entertaining bout of daft American sport.

- + Easy to get to grips with in a cuddly arcade kind of way.
- + Great additional touches relieve the monotony.
- Almost completely lacking in depth.
- What happened to the extra point field goal attempts?

Rated by James Gale

OUT OF 100

85

LEMMINGS



They are short, fat and have green hair – three very good reasons for them seemingly wanting to end it all. Psygnosis returns to the game that became a classic and helped it to become the company it is today. The wonderfully addictive, Lemmings.

Lemmings

Publisher: Psygnosis

Developer: Distinctive Develop.

Release Date: November

Game Type: Puzzle

No of Players: One

Price: £29.99



BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT: The rendered intro sequence is the indication that the game is running on a PlayStation; hardly the most visually impressive title to hail from the Psygnosis boys; although rather self-defeating blowing the little buggers up is still very good fun.

First Ten Minutes

It's been a long time, since my last encounter with these green-haired little bastards, yet just the preliminary levels make me wonder why I've left it so long? The extremely addictive gameplay remains completely intact as does the charming humour. I can almost feel the nostalgia numbing my brain.

The Competition

Tetris Plus -

JVC's king of the puzzle genre. admittedly there is very little here that has been seen a million times before, yet the game remains the definitive puzzler.



Super Puzzle Fighter -

Columns meets the Capcom beat-'em-up team, colourful, inventive and very addictive, an essential purchase for all fans of the puzzle genre.



Lost Vikings -

Update of the obscure Amiga classic's mad mix of platforms and puzzles. Not to all tastes but not as bad as its reputation would have you believe.



Compatibility



Are retro games cack?

The answer to that is yes and... errr no. Some games are true works of genius, their quality un-tarnished by time or subsequent leaps in technology. Yet many old titles really would be best left in a nostalgic recess of your mind, as I find that it all too often the case when these alleged classic games are unearthed several years down the line, that the myth of their once greatness is lost forever. Psygnosis' decision to re-issue their classic puzzler Lemmings, packaged with the first sequel *Oh No! More Lemmings*, has received the expected mixed reactions. Fortunately enough for me, the whole Lemmings phenomena completely failed to grab my attention the first time around, so I could approach the product with an open mind but still a little wary of its reputation. Sadly Lemmings is hardly the stuff of digital dreams but nevertheless, the game remains a enjoyable little exercise in time consumption.

For those in the dark, the gameplay places you in control of an army of Lemmings, who are odd little, green-topped creatures. Your task being the

successful navigation of increasingly tricky levels. Unfortunately these chaps have all the individuality, flair and quick-wittedness of the Trumpton fire crew, so the first Lemming released will plot the course for all that follow – be it walking off sheer drops or paddling into pools of lava.

To prevent major mousy blood bath mayhem, the player can nominate individual Lemmings to perform specific tasks in order to guide the others to safety. These range from 'blockers' who act like furry bouncers and send lemmings back the way that they have come, to digging diggers, bridge-building engineers and so on. Use them

to steer the needed quota of boys safely home, and you go onto the next level. The geographical complexity of each level increases each time as do the abilities of the titular characters.

It's still a great idea for a game, but awful visuals and complete lack of new inclusions won't do much to promote the game to a new audience, but it's still the gameplay which proves surprisingly addictive, if a little un-inspiring. Lemmings is very much a dinosaur when held in comparison with current puzzle type games, yet it's simple, absorbing gameplay and addictiveness mean that it's a game that's still crazy after all these years!

5



Rated by James Galt

STATION	These suicidal creatures make a welcome return to tax our grey matter again.	+ Huge amount of levels. + Lifespan of a healthy turtle. - No difference from the originals. - Now looking very, very dated.	OUT OF 100
			70

SMALL SOLDIERS



Small Soldiers

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Developer: Dreamworks

Release Date: November

Game Type: Action/Adventure

No of Players: 1-2

Price: £39.99

All the best things come in small packages, apparently, but do the diminutive cast of Electronic Arts' remodelling of current box office hit, *Small Soldiers*, have the goods to take on the big boys this Xmas?

First Ten Minutes

The most instantly striking aspect of this title is the quality of the character models and their movement, perfectly mimicking their silver screen counterparts. Sadly the gameplay is little less inspiring, the initial levels holding no surprises, but will this pattern continue?

The Competition

Tomb Raider -

Huge puzzle-laden adventure, featuring the delightful Lara Croft. Blessed with a long lifespan and now with its budget price tag, a worthy addition to anyone's collection.

Duke Nukem TTK -

GT take the Dukester into the third dimension in this mildly entertaining third person adventure, but fails to capture the full essence of the charismatic lead.

Deathtrap Dungeon -

Ian Livingstone's classic flip-page adventure book brought to life upon the PlayStation in third person form. Enjoyable but doesn't live up to expectations.

Compatibility



This doesn't make sense!

Why bother to purchase the rights to a movie that is near perfect for the conversion treatment, and produce a game that is almost completely unrelated. Ignoring Joe Dante's highly enjoyable movie, EA's version of *Small Soldiers* plot deviates greatly, revealing the origins of the on-going battle between the two lead factions, the Commando Elite and the Gorgonites. Mistake numero uno. As the deeply unimaginative plot unfolds, the player is presented with the usual fodder one associates with the an action oriented third-person, all of which blatantly stolen from such genres as the platformer and the puzzler.

Haven chosen your loyalties, be they to the war-mongering humanoid, Commando Elite or the far more charming mutants, Gorgonites, the disappointment

begins to set in. The action levels seem strangely flat and uninvolved, failing to live up to our high expectations. But, on a more positive note, the game has managed to emulate the rather nasty streak that ran through the movie, with any well-placed blasts being capable of removing a foe's head, or a flame burst reducing them to a pile of ash to the accompaniment of piercing screams and followed up by the obligatory witty one liner.

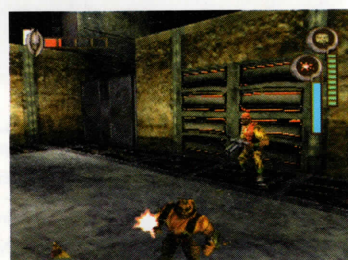
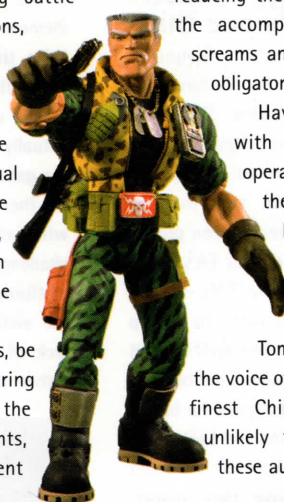
Having been produced with the complete co-operation of the creator of the movie, Mr Spielberg's Dreamworks, the code features various voice samples from the cast, including

Tommy Lee Jones who is the voice of the Commando Elite's finest Chip Hazard,. Although unlikely to help shift games, these audio bursts do lend the

proceedings a touch of class. The use of similar technology to that used in the movie, primarily the highly realistic Morph-X animation, Dreamworks has certainly created impressive polygon reproductions of the celluloid cast. The knock on effect of this though, is that the average backgrounds are made to look even less appealing.

The miniature warfare spans 20 3D levels, yet the lack of variation of both the design and gameplay content mean that only the least demanding gamer will persevere long enough to witness the end sequence. In keeping with the overall lack of excitement, the two player split screen mode provides only minor thrills, failing to throw the title the lifeline that is so desperately needed.

As a PlayStation reworking of the movie, *Small Soldiers* could have been a potential winner, yet this lump of mediocrity is yet another piece of production line tosh that will sell purely because of its license, not it's merits. ☹



ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: Two-player split screen deathmatch; give me link-up any day; find the colour-coded key to release a member of your squad - it's fun the first time, but the novelty will soon wear off.

Rated by James Gale

STATION		OUT OF 100
	+ Great characters and animation + Audio samples from the movie - Lacks variety and depth - Disappointing two-player mode	64

Not nearly as much fun as a real Action Man.

PSYBADEK

Take a large dose of *Cool Boarders*, a slice of *Mario* and dash of a bog standard shoot-'em-up. Put in the oven for approximately two years, and hey presto! You end up with a game called *Psybadek*. A recipe that could spell disaster for Psygnosis.

Psybadek

Publisher: Psygnosis

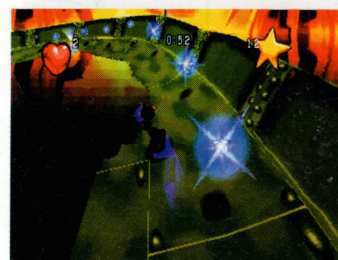
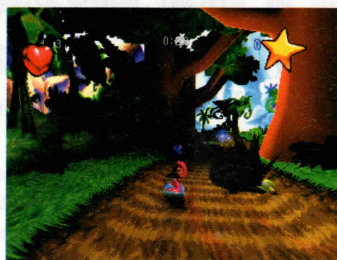
Developer: In-house

Release Date: Out now

Game Type: Racing/Platformer

No of Players: One

Price: £39.99



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: No matter how impressive to the eye, the visuals can't hide the gameplay's complete lack of polish; incidental animations, such as these dancing pine trees are rather nice, if a little distracting; stunts are selected using an onscreen menu, what a great idea that is!

The Competition

ReBoot -

EA's interpretation of the computer generated animation in the TV show. It's an unsteady blend of platform, shoot-'em-up and snowboarding. Great to watch - very poor to play.



Cool Boarders -

Sony's excellent snow bound stunt-fest has so far spawned two sequels and a huge following. One of the best games of this growing genre.



Chill -

Eidos' rather poor effort, attempts to emulate Sony's *Cool Boarders*, with the increased freedom of movement being one of the game's few finer moments.



First Ten Minutes

The excellent presentation shell is what we have all come to expect from Psygnosis. The musical score is pure nightclub, with tracks from David Holmes and BRA. However, first impressions of the gameplay itself aren't all that good. It's sluggish, slow and extremely fiddly. This had better improve with time, or I for one am going to very disappointed.



Kids in baggy trousers can mean only one thing

skateboarders and Psygnosis' futuristic fusion of the platform and racing genres *Psybadek*. The game owes as much to these tarmac daredevils as it does to *Mario*. The union of platformer and pseudo-skateboarding has already been proved to be rather a bad idea by EA's awful *ReBoot*. Undeterred by EA's failure, Psygnosis has continued to pump money into this project for well over 18 months - a development period that should have delivered a game far better than this. Based around the exploits of a bunch of Anime-styled characters and their attempts to save their planet, players have the option to choose one of the game's two selectable leads, one male, one female. However, gender appears to be the only tangible difference between the two.

The main concept behind the gameplay remains true to all the long felt traditions of the racing genre. The player must get themselves from point A to point B, avoiding any hazards along the way. Sometimes the player is confronted by a boss character or an ill-fitting sub game. An example is the Penguin shooting gallery a dull attempt at breaking up the basic racing action. These sections, in keeping with the overall tone of the product, smack of a complete lack of effort and are neither fun to play or remotely humorous.

As one of the most enjoyable elements of previous snow/skateboarding titles, the stunts one can perform here, are limited to a mere nine in total, all of which are hardly gob-smacking, and actually serve only minor importance to the gameplay itself.

The track design is commendable with each bend revealing a new challenge, be it a series of well timed platform leaps, jumps or obstacles. Yet the awful control method and general lack of speed, makes racing a chore rather than a delight. Most annoying

being the mid-track platform sections, with the momentum of the board making successful jumps near impossible to perform. Plus, without the benefit of continues, all too often a player's lives will be lost when attempting to negotiate the most basic of platform.

Psybadek tries desperately to break with convention, and this is its downfall. As a straight racer this may have worked, but the injection of various other styles offer only a limited enjoyment to near terminal levels. Another disappointing outing from Psygnosis. **S**



Compatibility



Rated by James Gale

STATION

Too much seasoning has soured the taste of this multi-flavoured broth.

- + Great graphics, and an amazing soundtrack.
- + A great deal of variety to the gameplay
- By including too many styles, it loses the plot.
- Annoyingly tough at times.

OUT OF 100

61

For the first time ever up to 4 players can join forces and do battle with absolute darkness in this explosive RPG.

The first multiplayer RPG with
simultaneous four player action.

Swap characters and equipment with
friends via a memory card.

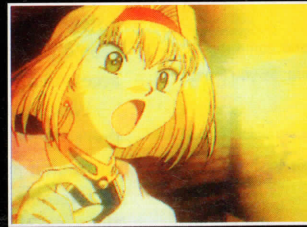
Eight characters classes all with
different abilities.

Explore a vast 3D fantasy
universe!

Non linear, real time game play.

Auto-mapping so players never
get lost.

"A unique RPG experience which should inject fresh impetus into the RPG genre" - Play Magazine



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TEST DRIVE 5

If *Test Drive 4* had been as playable with a joypad as it was with a steering wheel it would have given the best driving games on the market a run for their money. *Test Drive 5* offers the opportunity to do this, but will it take pole position or fail to qualify again?

Test Drive 5

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Developer: Pitbull Syndicate

Release Date: Out now

Game Type: Racing

No of Players: 1-2

Price: £34.99



CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN: The crashing physics are actually very good. It's just a little annoying that you end up witnessing them so often; the drag strip has no corners so it's simply a case of matching up cars to see which are the faster; it's not often that we bother using a screen-shot of a loading screen but these are actually quite cool as you get a different photograph of the cars every time it appears. One little note though, *Test Drive 5* does take ages to load.

First Ten Minutes

Test Drive 5 offers no immediate thrills when you first hit the road, so at first you're left feeling a little cold. The steep learning curve doesn't help with first impressions either, but *Test Drive 5* will definitely grow on you.

The Competition

Gran Turismo -

Set the standard for all to follow. Will take a lot of beating.



TOCA 2 -

Superb car handling and computer AI. As close to *Gran Turismo* as you'll get.



Need For Speed 3 -

Very similar in style to *Test Drive 5*, although not quite as playable.



Compatibility



Steering wheels are an expensive luxury for most PlayStation owners, which is why it's always nice to see a driving game that can actually make owning one worthwhile. *Test Drive 5* is such a game and like *Test Drive 4* before it, it is certainly one of the most playable racing games ever when you are using a steering wheel. But what about those people who haven't got, or don't have access to a wheel?

Well, you're not really catered for. Don't get me wrong though, the analog and digital pad control on *Test Drive 5* isn't terrible, just a little nondescript. The game engine really doesn't stand out unless you're using a steering wheel which is I'm afraid, too limiting, when games like *Gran Turismo*, *TOCA 2* and *Colin McRae Rally* can offer almost perfect control with every peripheral device you can throw at them.

Classic Angle

Test Drive 5 can't hope to offer as many cars as the superlative *Gran Turismo* but each of the twenty four on offer, wills you to give it a go. Everything from Jaguar XJ220's to

Aston Martin's can be found. These however are standard fare when you compare them to the incredible sixties cars that you can take the wheels of. It's a real case of beauty and the beast here, and matching up the new and old cars gives an angle that most other driving games can't offer.

As well as a cool selection of cars, *Test Drive 5* also has over sixteen courses set in locations throughout the world. Each course has its own environment which is immediately recognisable, although, the visuals are I'm afraid, not that hot. In fact, *Test*



Drive 5 suffers from some cringe-worthy draw-in, although thankfully this is not a constant factor.

Set Back

A steep learning curve also detracts from *Test Drive 5*. In fact it's sure to be enough to quickly put some people off - as until you've grasped the controls, *Test Drive 5* really isn't much fun. After a while, a good game will eventually shine through, and you will inevitably like it if you use a steering wheel. Unfortunately, even then, at its most playable it's still not up to the standard of *Gran Turismo*. Ⓜ



Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION

Although slightly dull, it really does shine when using a steering wheel.

- + One of the best driving games, with a steering wheel.
- + A good mix of old and new cars to try.
- Still only really playable with a steering wheel.
- Terrible, terrible rock/thrash music sound track.

OUT OF 100

70

TEST DRIVE 4x4

"Where's the gameplay?" It's the \$64,000, bog standard question raised by regular, cynical reviewers on a regular basis. This time, thanks to EA, the proprietors of the phrase have a valid point – one hell of a point actually.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Test Drive 4x4 this may be, but it certainly isn't Test Drive Off-Road all of the time. It seems as though your cars can actually drive on the surface of water. Hmm... the military vehicles are some of the best looking and most fun (If you can call it that) vehicles to drive.

Test Drive 4 x 4 wasn't at the back of the queue when gameplay was handed out. Oh no. It was in the wrong ones. It was towards the front of the queue marked 'total lack of gameplay' and fairly well placed in the 'sequels with almost no improvements over the original' queue.

Which, doesn't necessarily spell the end of the world but... when the original, *Test Drive Off Road* has all the off-road capabilities of a pair of satin sandals, it's slightly important that the developers improve on it before they release the inevitable sequel. This simple concept has been seriously overlooked here.



Rated by Saul Trewern

STATION

Take your old Tonka toys to the sand pit instead.

- + Ruts, bumps and jumps all affect handling.
- + Plenty of off-road vehicles to get your teeth into.
- The game is just plain boring.
- Terrible EA standard fare rock sound track.

OUT OF 100

25

Tractors

On the face of it though, *Test Drive 4x4* looks as though it could provide an off-road driving experience that even a seasoned tractor driving farmer could get their teeth into. There's over twenty different vehicles to choose from, ranging from Range Rovers to Cherokee's and pick up trucks to military vehicles. The problem here is that each vehicle is sectioned off into its own class, which gives the main event, the World Tour a very limited appeal indeed. A single race does allow you to mix the classes of vehicle though.

Before you embark on a World Tour you visit the show room where you have the choice of only two vehicles. As you win more races and earn extra credit though, you gain access to some of the faster better handling off-rovers. At least on paper anyway. Actually driving different vehicles makes hardly any difference to the game at all.

Manure

With only five admittedly long tracks, it doesn't take long to see everything that *Test Drive 4x4* offers either. Which wouldn't be such a problem if it had any kind of gameplay that would keep you coming back. Alas it doesn't. Simply hold accelerate and steer your car. It offers no excitement, no on-screen thrills and spills and definitely no satisfaction.

In fact *Test Drive 4x4* has no redeemable features so I'll keep this short and sweet; Don't buy it.

Test Drive 4x4

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Developer: Accolade

Release Date: Out now

Game Type: Racing

No of Players: 1-2

Price: £34.99

First Ten Minutes

From the outset to the finish, this game is a loser. There's no immediate buzz created when you load it up and even in the first ten minutes you get an instinctive feeling that this game is a dog. And you'd be right - it barks and has fleas.

The Competition

Colin McRae Rally -

The ultimate off road driving game. Period.

Monster Trucks -

If it played as good as it looked, it would only be mediocre.

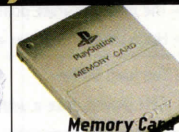
Test Drive Off Road -

Incredible draw-in went hand-in-hand with terrible gameplay.

Compatibility



Analogue



Memory Card



Steering Wheel



Neg-Con

NFL EXTREME

It seems that publishers have realised that real American football sims just aren't cutting the mustard. Enter Sony's take on American football then, in an arcade style...

NFL Extreme

Publisher: Sony Computer Ent.

Developer: 989 Sports

Release Date: December

Price: £34.99

STATION

+ Very solid graphics and animation.

+ Good sense of humour.

- The arcade and sim aspects don't quite gel.

- Could be a little too simple for real fans.

OUT OF 100

80

If NFL Blitz hadn't been around in the same month then Extreme would look a far better prospect.

Rated by Saul Trewern

American football is complicated.

Thankfully, NFL Extreme takes the seriousness out of it by adding an arcade twist. And to an extent it succeeds. There are plenty of special moves, cool animations and humorous touches that make it far more accessible than most other American football games.

It also looks the part. The graphics are colourful, bright and solid. The animation is smooth and the sound effects, especially the player chat is very funny, for a while. The speed of the game can be changed, so too can the size of the players on the pitch. It has plenty of options, all of the NFL Teams and a facility where you can sell and draft players. So, even for an arcade style game NFL Extreme has plenty to get you engrossed, if it wasn't for one thing. It's boring. It's not crap, or unplayable, just plain old boring. You will even get a good few games out of it but unlike NFL Blitz, NFL Extreme has no soul.

The neat arcade touches, like flame coming off the players feet when they speed up, or jumping somersaults to avoid tackles are only interesting for the first few times that you see them. Once you've seen it all though, NFL Extreme becomes just another nondescript American football game. Shame that.

5



POOL SHARK

Recreating the atmosphere of a smokey basement pool hall along with gameplay to match is not easy on the PlayStation. So is Actua Sports' Pool Shark just smoke without fire?

Pool Shark

Publisher: Gremlin Interactive

Developer: Mirage

Release Date: Out Now

Price: £39.99

STATION

+ The most accurate pool physics we've seen.

+ Huge variety in tables and locations.

- Too hard by far.

- CPU players take a while to play their shots.

OUT OF 100

87

The best pool sim available on the PlayStation, but not necessarily a classic game.

Rated by Saul Trewern

It's all about balls. That's really makes a good pool game. And in Pool Shark, the physics engine which drives the balls around the table is so good that it makes the ball and stick action come as as close to the real thing as possible. And it's in this area that Pool Shark truly excels.

In fact it's the most accurate pool simulation that we've seen on the PlayStation or any other machine for

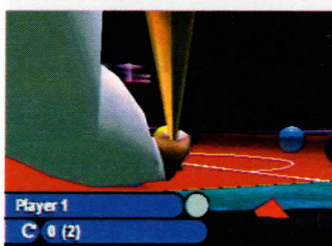
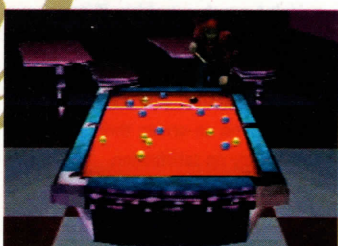
that matter. It even feels more realistic than the classic Amiga pool game, Arcade Pool, which is no mean feat.

Pool Shark doesn't stop at simply offering the best game engine though. It has a wealth of different options to play through. Every set of rules and ball types you can think of have been covered and the tables range from straight forward pool hall style to glass, L shaped and even pentagonal tables.

You can play in a number of different competitions too, and there are eighteen CPU characters to play against. Each polygonal character can be seen taking their shots which adds more realism to the game. The most fun however is to play against a mate. But then it always is.

It's not only the balls that are polished on Pool Shark. The visuals, gameplay and options all too have a high gloss finish. A classic game then? Well no actually, because we feel that no matter how many options there are, it's all simply a case of playing pool. So the gameplay may get a little tiresome after a while. However, Pool Shark still manages to offer the most accurate and interesting game of pool you can get without a table, cue or chalk so it should keep fans happy for a while.

5



V-RALLY PLATINUM

Last year, V-Rally set the standard for other driving games to follow. Over a year later it returns, only now it's got some real challengers to compete against.

Three smashed joypads and a few dents in the wall is what it cost for me to complete V-Rally. With a sense of satisfaction not felt since the last time I cut an XR3i up at a roundabout, I sat back and thought to myself, 'Yeah, I'm da man!' I eventually mastered it you see, but believe me, playing V-Rally, well, it's not like dusting crops boy!

Playing the Platinum version of V-Rally, after just a few corners it all came back to me. Those temper tantrums where the air turned a deep shade of blue, those hurled joypads just missing my fellow workers' heads and again, that true sense of

satisfaction once you've mastered it. What I'm saying then is that V-Rally is incredibly hard, but although you get frustrated with it beyond belief, you're still compelled to keep on playing.

V-Rally is highly addictive and challenging, which in my eyes is a good combination. It's also one of the fastest most playable driving games of its time. Nowadays though, it has *Gran Turismo*, *Colin McRae Rally* and *TOCA 2* to deal with and basically it doesn't stand a chance. But now it's only twenty quid, so if you missed it first time around, there's no excuse not to run out and buy a piece of gaming history. **S**



V-Rally

Publisher: Infogrames

Developer: In-house

Release Date: Out Now

Price: £19.99

STATION

+ Still very solid in the graphical department.
+ Loads of tracks and cars offer value for money.

- Still as hard to control as it ever was...
- ... and the analog pad doesn't help at all.

OUT OF 100

89

Although V-Rally has been eclipsed by better driving games, at this price you really can't lose.

Rated by Saul Trewern

STREAK

Streak. No, not a mid-summer's game of naked exhibitionism at Lords. It's actually GT's new hoverboard racing game. Is it as much fun as running nude across a cricket pitch though?

Like a bullet from a gun, Streak is fast. In fact even Linford Christie with the pointy end of a Saturn V rocket wedged firmly up his fudge tunnel, would have trouble keeping up with Streak. Yes, it really is that eye-wateringly fast.

As one of ten cool-looking but different hoverboarders, you race over a wealth of courses designed with hoverboarding in mind, with plenty of opportunities to do some wicked stunts. Which is where Streak falls down. Although the tracks have stunts in mind, pulling them off is way too easy and the results are rarely ever spectacular.

There is also hardly any variety, so once you've mastered the basics of pulling off the tricks there isn't much more to see. The visuals aren't exactly awe-inspiring either, but when a game runs at this speed you hardly ever get the opportunity to take in the views anyway.

The racing however is a different matter, being impressively fast and frantic, especially in the two or four player link-up mode.

Streak may have its flaws but it has the capabilities to entertain less discerning gamers into the early hours of the morning. And no, running past Ian Botham with your tackle hanging out isn't as much fun as playing Streak. **S**

Streak

Publisher: GT Interactive

Developer: Singletrac

Release Date: Out Now

Price: £39.99

STATION

+ Extremely fast and often exciting gameplay.
+ Cool characters to choose from.

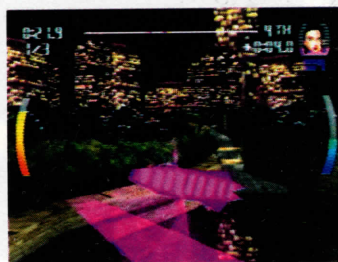
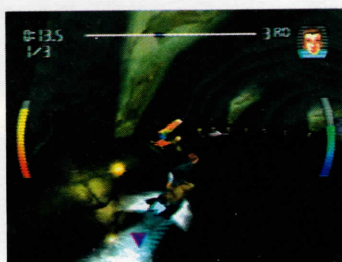
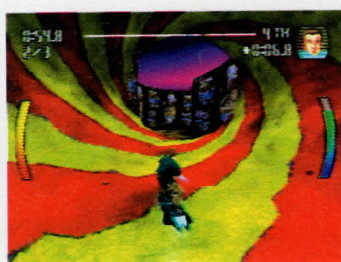
- Not the prettiest game in the world.
- A few bugs mar the enjoyment of the game.

OUT OF 100

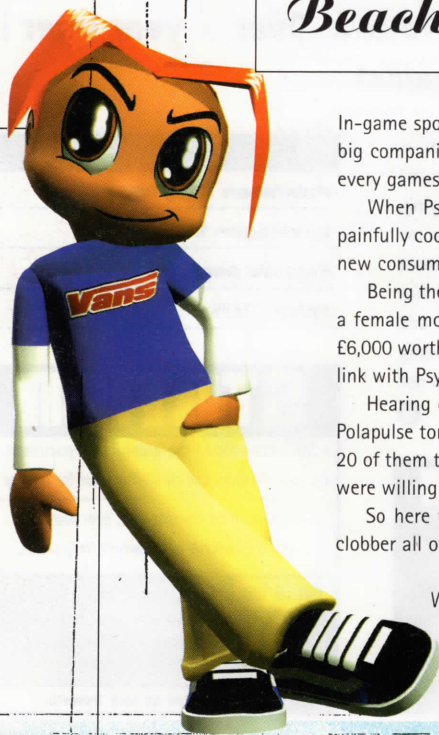
79

Fast, frantic and a little flawed. Still enjoyable though.

Rated by Saul Trewern



Beach Babes and Street Beach Babes and Street Boyz



In-game sponsorship opportunities are becoming more and more of a regular thing these days. It seems that big companies have finally cottoned on to the fact that there is a whole virtual world right in the heart of every gamer's room just waiting to be fly posted.

When Psygnosis put together their colourful futuristic hoverboard game - *Psybadek*, Kangaroo Poo, the painfully cool skate wear company from the West Country saw the perfect opportunity to reach out to a whole new consumer base and introduce them to their superb range of youth clothing.

Being the generous, fashion conscious bloggers that we are, and also seeing the perfect opportunity to get a female model out of her clothes and down onto a beach in the middle of winter, we decided to demand £6,000 worth of the latest street and surf clobber from the Ilfracombe based company, courtesy of the tenuous link with Psygnosis and *Psybadek*, and then give it all away to you.

Hearing of our idea, Polaroid then decided that they also wanted to give us a bunch of their smart new Polapulse torches to give away as well. So, not wanting to look a gift torch in the mouth we greedily grabbed 20 of them too, not quite sure how we were going to implement them in a beach-related photoshoot, but we were willing to give it a go

So here you go, 6 pages of pretentiously cool photography portraying £6,000 worth of genuinely cool clobber all of which can be won by simply answering some ridiculously easy questions on page 89.

Well, it got us out of the office didn't it.



BABE

WFTL12: Shaggy Jacket



PHOTOGRAPHY: FRAN SCHILLER, IAN ROXBURGH
MODELS: HELEN BOULTON, GREG YONWIN

Boyz Beach Babes and Street Boyz

Street Boyz

Beach Babes and Street Boyz

£6,000 worth of gear to be won courtesy of Pysgnosis, Kangaroo Poo and Polaroid



BOY

S005W: Washed Cap

MKP: Printed Tail Sweatshirt

WHH08: Cord Cargo Pants

DW08: Kangaroo Printed Jacket

BABE

S007L: Husky Hat

WHH03: Checked Brushed Cargo Pants

WFT03: Back Logo Top - Roo Air
Techno Back Pack



BABE

WFT32: Long Sleeve Back Logo Top

WHH06: Twill Cargo Pants

BOY

WE09: Les Ares Top

WHH08: Cord Pants



BOY

MAP: Printed Hooded Sweatshirt

WHH03: Checked Brushed Cargo Pants

BABE

WFTL52: Woolly Rib Top

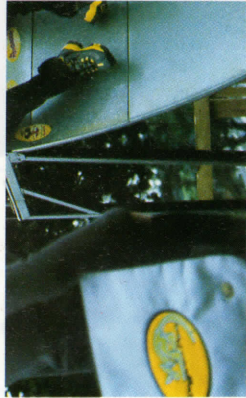
WHHL10: Twill Skirt



BOY



MAP: Printed Hooded Sweatshirt
WHH03: Checked Brushed Cargo Pants



BABE

S40: DJ Bag



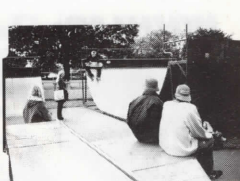
BABE

KK00: Kids Printed T-Shirt
WHHL11: Cord Skirt



BABE

- WFTL13:** Shaggy Gilet
- WFTL36:** Crop Hooded Jacket
- WHHL10:** Twill Skirt
- 5484:** Active Watch 5ATM



BABE

WELO2: *Chamonix Half Zip Top*

BABE

WFTL13: *Shaggy Gilet*

WFTL36: *Crop Hooded Jacket*

WHHL10: *Twill Skirt*



BABE

WFTL13: *Shaggy Gilet*

WFTL29: *Fitted Top*

WHHL10: *Twill Skirt*

A copy of Durbadek

A Polaroid Polapulse Torch

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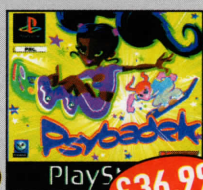
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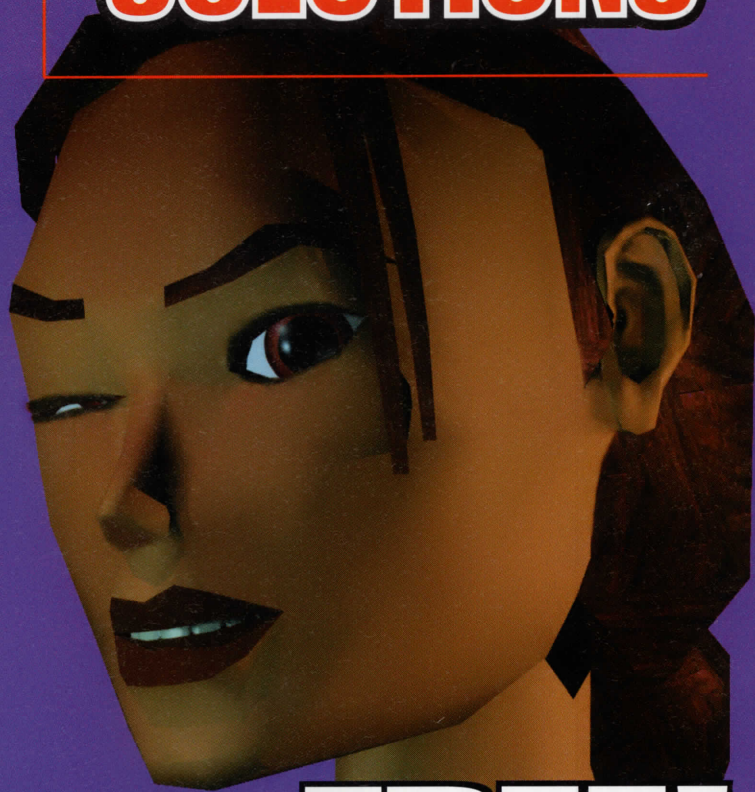
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Is your inability to finish your latest game affecting your social life? Not getting out much anymore? Partner becoming frustrated with your apparent joystick obsession? Don't fret, help is at hand. Simply swallow your pride, take a deep breath and join our merry band of cheats and videogame reprobates in THE eEDGE.



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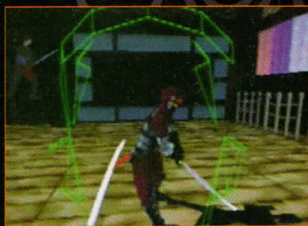
BUSHIDO BLADE 2

FIGHT AS SUB-CHARACTERS

By completing the battle story mode whilst keeping both sub-characters alive you will have access to them for any other mode of the game.

SLASH MODE

To gain the Slash Mode you must first complete the Boss Mode without using any continues. You will then find a new Slash Mode option on the menu.



CHANBARRA MODE

Defeat all thirteen bosses in Boss Mode without using any continues. Now highlight the Link Mode option and press ↓, ↓.

HUNDRED SLASHES MODE

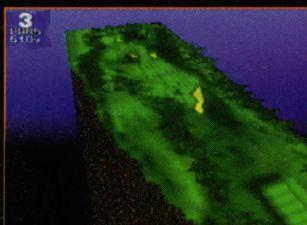
Simply complete the game with six regular characters.



EVERYBODY'S GOLF

ALL CHARACTERS/COURSES

Insert a memory card into port two and hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 before the title screen. Then press ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, →, →, ←, ↑, ↑, ↓, ↑, ←, →, →, ←, after the flash and before the logo arrives. If you've entered the code correctly you will hear a sound.



BIO FREAKS

ALTERNATIVE VIEW

During a match Hold L2 + R2 and press away. To return to normal view hold L2 + R2 and press ↓.

FIGHT CLONUS

To fight against the Clonus version of an opponent hold select whilst choosing an opponent at the character select screen.

JEREMY MCGRATH SUPER CROSS '98

REVERSED TRACKS

Enter SHOWTIME as a name.

AUTOMATIC SAVED GAME LOADING:

Enter MCGRATH as a name.

MIRRORED TRACKS:

Complete the season in first place using the reversed tracks.

YAMAHA YZ80 BIKE:

Finish the first race in first place under advanced mode. To race Jeremy one on one, win the very first race on advanced mode. Note: This will also allow a solo race against Jeremy McGrath.

M80CC BIKE:

Finish a season in first place under intermediate mode.



KLONOA: DOOR TO PHANTOMILE

BALUE'S TOWER (EXTRA VISION) BONUS LEVEL:

Save all 72 Phantomilians.

MUSIC TEST:

Complete the Balue's Tower bonus game. A music test option will appear on the level selection screen.

CONTROL TITLE SCREEN:

Press L2 and R2 at the title screen to blow the leaves off the screen.

LEVEL SELECT:

Complete the game, then return to the title screen. Select the "Continue" option, then select "Vision Clear".



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MISSION 7: Password: 9G1860S39

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MISSION 9: Password: XNB40MPRJ

MISSION 10: Password: 59E6FGD5P

MISSION 11: Password: 17VQRL7ZH

MISSION 12: Password: 3UM4JGI0S

MISSION 13: Password: 59EEWHYQT

MISSION 14: Password: 08IWKSCKW

ANT MISSIONS

Complete the game once. Then, set the difficulty level to "Hard", select "Campaigns", and go to England to access the ant missions.

CHEAT MODE

Click on the "Teams" button menu with Circle (or which ever button is currently configured as "Cancel"). Then, move the pointer over the following icons on the tool bar and press Circle on each.

INSTANT IRON CURTAIN

⬇, ⬆, ⬇, ⬆, ⬇, ⬆

FULL MAP

⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆

PARABOMB

⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆

CHRONOSHIFT

⬇, ⬆, ⬇, ⬆, ⬇, ⬆

MONEY IS PEOPLE

⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆

INSTANT VICTORY

⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆

EASY MONEY

⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆

NUCLEAR ATTACK

⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆



MADDEN '99

BONUS TEAMS:

Enter one of the following names as a code, then make an identical entry as a player name on the "Create Player" screen.

TEAM

NFC Pro Bowl – BESTNFC
AFC Pro Bowl – AFCBEST
All-Madden – BOOM
All-Time
Stat Leaders – IMTHEMAN
60's Greats – PEACELOVE
70's Greats – BELLBOTTOMS
80's Greats – SPRBWLSHUFL
90's Greats – HEREANDNOW
Enable real names
on classic teams – MADDENNAMES

All-Time Greats – TURKEYLEG
75th Anniversary
Team – THROWBACK
NFL
Equipment Team – GEARGUYS
1999
Cleveland Browns – WELCOMEBACK
EA Sports – INTHEGAME
Tiburon – HAMMERHEAD

BONUS STADIUMS:

Enter one of the following names as a code, then make an identical entry as a player name on the "Create Player" screen.

STADIUM CODE

EA Sports – EA_STADIUM
Tiburon – OURHOUSE
Cleveland – DOGPOUND99
RFK – THEHOGS
Original Miami – NOTAFISH
Original Tampa – SOMBRERO
Original Oakland – STICKEM
Astrodome – FOR_RENT

ME THE



MEDIEVIL

DEAD GOOD GUIDE

If you have taken the role of the undead Dan Fortesque and attempted to fight the might of the evil wizard and his army, you will have discovered by now that the battle is rather one-sided. Yup, you really do need some help. STATION delivers the ultimate dead man's guide to even up the odds in this Sony blockbuster. Just don't go getting all Medievil on us.



Medievil



DAN'S CRYPT

The crypt is basically an area for you to get used to the controls. Within the crypt are many items which you will need during your quest, and books which give you useful information. When you've become accustomed to the control method and taken all the items, you should exit the crypt by placing the Star Rune Stone in the hand (just walk into it) next to the gate at the far end of the main room. The Star Rune can be found in the passage which leads away from the main hall.

THE GRAVEYARD

This level sees Dan returning to his beloved Gallowmere, where he finds the dead have risen from their graves. You start at the gates of the graveyard with a path leading away in front of you. Follow the path and you'll find the first two zombies to kill. These two won't move very fast, and they provide a good opportunity to get used to attacking the game's foes. With these two out of the way, continue along the path to a mound with three more

zombies to destroy. To the right of the mound is the Earth Rune which you need to collect before moving on. Up ahead is a Fountain of Rejuvenation which can be used to restore Dan's health, step into the fountain to recharge lost health.

To the right of the fountain is a gate with another hand next to it, you can place the Earth Rune in it and step through the gate. In this area you'll find a few more zombies to use as sword fodder and a couple of items. To the left of the mound is some cash and on the top of the mound itself is the Chaos Rune. Collect both of these and return to the steps near the health fountain. Place the Chaos Rune in the hand at the top of the steps to open the gate. The book on the other side tells you 'Nothing remains hidden under the gaze of an angel'. Further along the path is a statue of an angel, if you strike this statue it rotates to open the gate that it faces, hence the phrase in the book. Hit the statue once to turn it to face the small fenced area with a floating Chalice. Reading the book will tell you that you can fill the Chalice to enable you to visit an area to get a new weapon. Go back and slash the statue two more times to open the gate opposite the Chalice area. Trot off down the

path you've just opened to find some handy items. Return to the statue, and if you've killed enough zombies to fill the Chalice (you will be told when) then collect it by moving the statue to open the gate again. Take the final path from the statue which takes you past the Skull Gates. Continue on and up the hill to a monument killing the zombies as you go. When you go down the other side, three coffins pop up out of the ground, revealing more zombies to dispatch. Around this area are plenty of items to collect before moving on. Continue along the path using the fountain on the way if you need to. Walk through the water but make sure you use the bridge to get across the deeper section. Examine the head by the gate to reveal more of the story and then go through the gate. If you've collected the Chalice, you'll be taken to the Hall of Heroes to pick up the Crossbow from Canny Tim (see Hall of Heroes section).

CEMETERY HILL

At the start of the level you'll be shown a short story sequence. When you regain control of Dan, head through the gap in the wall and up to the pool

Hall of Heroes

The hall contains statues of heroes from the past. You will visit the hall each time you fill the Chalice and collect it. When you arrive in the hall, you can stand on the Chalice tile in front of a statue to receive a new weapon, although you can only get weapons from a statue which has a green glow. The first time you enter, you'll get the Crossbow from Canny Tim who is the first hero on the left as you enter the hall. Once you've paid homage to all of the statues of the ground floor you be allowed to access the upper level and more heroes. When you've collected your new tool of destruction and wish to leave, stand on the plinth where you first entered the hall and you'll be whisked away!





of lava with boulders dropping into it. If you don't have the club, then skip this next paragraph and go straight to the lava pool area. Note that you will need to come back to this level later with a club to get the Witch Talisman.

If you do have a club, then go through the archway to the right of the small lava pool and smash the boulder blocking the cave entrance. Enter the cave and go through the door at the far end of the hallway. Smash the book case and enter the gap behind it. Light your club by placing it in the fire and then run back out of the room and go into the room at the top of the steps. Smash the fireplace in the centre of the room and the gates will open, allowing you to collect the Chalice and, more importantly, the Witch Talisman. Exit the cave and go back to the lava pool.

You have to make your way up the path to where the boulders are coming from. You can either jump over the boulders or just avoid them, or you can use your shield to destroy them. You will notice that there are gaps in the path which the boulders bounce over - use these as places to avoid the boulders. Also, keeping to one side of the path can save you from being hit. Reaching the top of the hill reveals two gargoyles producing the boulders who then explode, realising they have failed their master. To the left of the area is some money, and to the right is a fountain to replenish Dan's health once more. Leave the level by passing through the door.

THE HILLTOP MAUSOLEUM

At the start of the level you'll find yourself in a hallway with a number of tombstones along either side. At the far

Weapon Guide

By collecting the Chalice in a level, you are granting access to the Hall of Heroes to pick up a new weapon or power-up. Throughout this guide is the list of items you can expect to collect when you visit the hall, and who the item is from.

FIRST FLOOR

CROSSBOW - Canny Tim

LIFE BOTTLE - Canny Tim

WARHAMMER - Stanyer Iron Hewer

CHESTS OF CASH - Stanyer Iron Hewer

BROADSWORD - Woden the Mighty

CHESTS OF CASH - Woden the Mighty

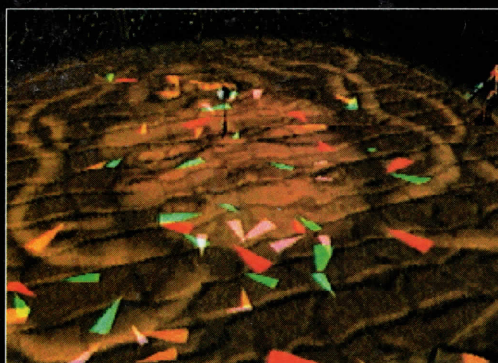
end is a locked gate and a chest containing a club. As you make your way along the room you'll be attacked by torch-wielding imps which take a few hits to kill. Pick up the club and use it to kill the imps, although don't go mad as the club can only be used a limited number of times. Break the tombstones with the club to reveal hidden items. The tombstone with light shining out from underneath hides a passage to the new part of the level. Break the stone and drop down. Here you'll find a large stained glass window with a couple more of the torch carriers on the other side. Use the club to break the glass and kill the imps.

Here you have three passages to explore. Take the left-hand passage with the red glass and make your way down, jumping over the spikes as you go. At the end is an Earth Rune, but once collected the floor starts to collapse. Quickly run back to the top of the path before the floor gives way, plunging Dan to his doom. Next, take the tunnel opposite the passage from where you first entered this area and head up the slope, avoiding the spikes. Open the gate at the end using the Earth Rune. In the hall, watch out for the imp without a torch as he'll try to steal your weapon. If he does pinch it, just kill him to get it back, but be quick or he'll run off! Go up the stairs and through to the next room to find the Moon Rune, getting health on the way if needed. Go

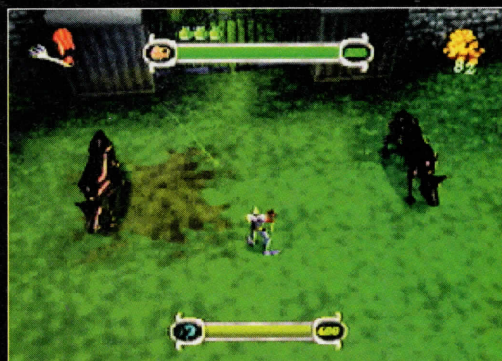
through the second door to find the Chaos Rune in the room with the skeleton playing the piano. Go back into the room with the stained glass windows and run down the screen towards you and you'll see that you are back in the initial tombstone room. Go the same way as before, but when you reach the point where you broke the first glass window, head right and down the passage to find the Sheet Music at the bottom. Make your way back to the skeleton and use the Sheet Music, this will reveal the Chalice. You now need to use the Chaos Rune to open the door in the room at the bottom of the stairs. Enter the new room and push the flaming block so that it burns the large heart at the end of the tunnel to awaken the demon. Now head back up to the room where you discovered the Moon Rune to face the Stained Glass Demon.

BOSS 1 - STAINED GLASS DEMON

This guy is not as tough as he looks and his heart is his weakness. By far the best weapon to use against him is the crossbow. Don't bother shooting until he rises up in the centre of the room and his heart is exposed. At all other times, keep moving to avoid the demon's attacks. It should only take about three sessions of shooting his heart for him to pop his clogs, allowing you to collect the Skull Key.



Medieval



Weapon Guide

After a few visits to the Hall of Heroes, you'll be allowed to get to the second floor and yet more statues of heroes from the past.

SECOND FLOOR

SPEARS - Female Warrior
 LONGBOW - Ravenhooves
 GOLD SHIELD - Sturmgard
 AXE - Bloodmonath Skull Cleaver
 FLAMING LONGBOW - Ravenhooves
 CHESTS OF GOLD - Bloodmonath Skull Cleaver
 MAGIC SWORD - Dirk Steadfast
 MAGIC LONGBOW - Ravenhooves

RETURN TO THE GRAVEYARD

Initially, the layout of the level is exactly the same as before, the difference being that you start in a different place. When you cross the bridge at the beginning, it will collapse, so run straight across or jump it. Work through the level until you find the Skull Gates and then use the Skull Key to unlock them. Before

entering, backtrack up the last set of steps and jump onto the grass bank that runs along the side of the path past the skull gates. Staying on the bank allows you to access the health fountain near the locked gates further along from the Skull Gates. When you enter the Skull Gates, you'll meet a few wolves that move rather quickly and can be hard to kill. Further along the path you'll find an Undertaker's Hut. You need the Star Rune to open the gate to get in. The Star Rune can be found at the top of the mound to the rear of the hut, watch out for the wolves though. Enter the Undertaker's Hut and pick up the items either side of the door. After heading down into the darkness, you'll find the Chalice for this level. You can either head left or right from here, either way leads you to some light lifts which take you to a new area when you jump into them. On the other side, you have to push the square blocks into the water and then jump onto them to get to the rejuvenating fountain. Go through the gate to meet the Grave Yard Guardians.

BOSS 2 - GRAVEYARD GUARDIANS

The guardians are two wolves who slowly walk around the outside of their small arena. You can't hit

the wolves until they teleport into the middle and appear in a dark form. If you hang around in the middle you can bait them into teleporting. If you can hit them as they appear they will not damage you. It will take a while, but the guardians aren't too difficult to defeat. Your prize for doing so is the ability to Rush, which can be used to break weak walls and other structures.

To the North is the Enchanted Earth level which you need to visit later, but for now head on into the Scarecrow Fields...

SCARECROW FIELDS

As you'd expect, you meet plenty of crows on this level and they attack from above. Luckily, one hit finishes them off, even with the small sword. As for the scarecrows themselves, don't try to kill them because you can't, just run away from them. Follow the path and you'll come across a number of haystacks. Out of these will jump some pitchfork wielding maniacs, so be aware!

The next obstacle you'll find is a hay cart blocking a gateway, simply hit the end of the truck with your sword and it'll move out the way. A little further along, a large robot in a fenced-off area awaits you, when you enter the pen the robot comes to life. You are trapped in, so you have to fight the robot to get out and receive the Moon Rune. Run between his legs attack him from behind using the crossbow or throwing knives. He isn't too strong and will soon be scrap metal.

Go back to the hay cart you moved and opposite is the hand awaiting the Moon Rune. Open the door and

Arsen About

Underneath the haystacks is a quantity of hidden coinage. You can either slash away at the haystack to dispose of it or use a far easier method. Equip master Dan with the club and set light to it in one of the fires. Next, stick your flaming club into the haystack and watch it burn away, revealing all that lovely money!





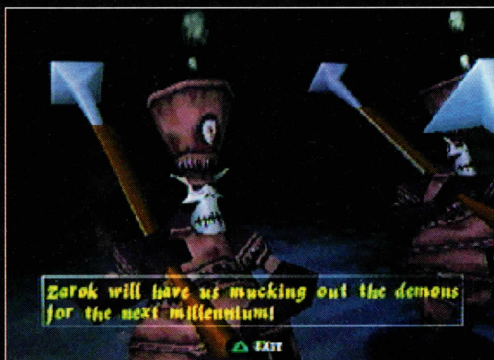
you'll find the Earth Rune inside, along with numerous bats flitting about. Take the Earth Rune to the robot's pen to unlock the second gate to get to the windmill. Use the Windy Miller technique for dodging the sails to get to the rear of the mill and a welcome health fountain shower. A short walk ahead is a second robot, but this one chucks fireballs at you. Use the same method as before to send this guy packing.

Grab the rune and open the gate next to it. The next building you find is a large barn. Make your way around to the other side and open the chest to release Kul Katura the Serpent Lord - he's on your side so don't panic! Make sure you stay out of the cornfields, as many a mad machine lies within, and they hurt. Follow the path that leads to a windmill with a broken sail. Use the gap created by the broken sail to get through the mill. The path then leads to a number of walled sections with blades and moving floors. These may look daunting but really aren't that hard to get past, just keep moving and avoid the nasty blades. The sixth has two exits - the first takes you out of the level whilst the further one allows you to get some money, and also the part for the harvester in the barn.

When you get to the barn, move the cart blocking the small barn door. Inside, you need to push the haybale up to the tallest crate so that you can reach the wooden ledge above. Strike the level to lower the harvester and then use the Harvester Part to activate it.

THE SLEEPING VILLAGE

The people of the village have been possessed by Zarak, so you shouldn't attack them unless it's really necessary. As you enter the village, to your left is the Church. Inside you'll find that the Crucifix is missing from the wall and



you need to find a replacement. Come out of the church and turn left - the path leads to a fountain with a rune on top. Head away from the fountain towards the riverside and down some steps. At the bottom is a lever for the fountain. With the fountain turned off you can recover the Chaos Rune. Use this to open the Library, it has a book above the door which is right next to the fountain. Once inside, break down the bookcase with either a dash or hammer blow and pick up the Crucifix Cast. Your next stop is the house just across the street which holds the Moon Rune for collection.

As you exit the house, follow the street along to find another open door. In this building you will find a number of barrels and some fish in crates. To the far end of the room is a metal gate which can be opened with the Moon Rune. Push a barrel onto the gold platform to open up a trapdoor on the other side of the gate. Go down into the trapdoor and down the steps. Enter the door at the end and go up the stairs on the other side. Break the barrels in the far corner to access the rune. Take this back downstairs and open the gate.

Strike the switch and clamber back upstairs again to get the Landlord's Bust from the corner behind the counter. When you reach the street again you'll see some guards arriving in the village. Use the Warhammer to stomp them into the ground. The Blacksmith's can be found opposite the church near the village entrance. Use the Crucifix Cast and the Landlord's Bust next to the furnace and then jump up and down on the bellows to make a Crucifix. Go to the Church and place the Crucifix on the wall and then pick up the Safe Key.

Follow the path opposite the Church and you'll find an opening in the rock wall next to the small lake. This

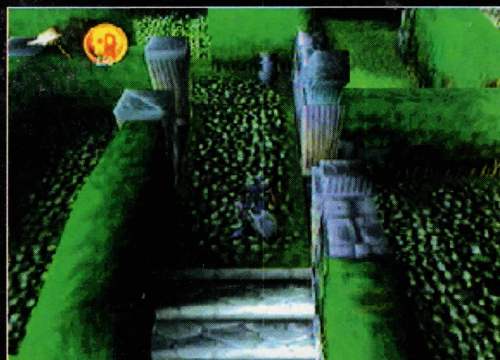


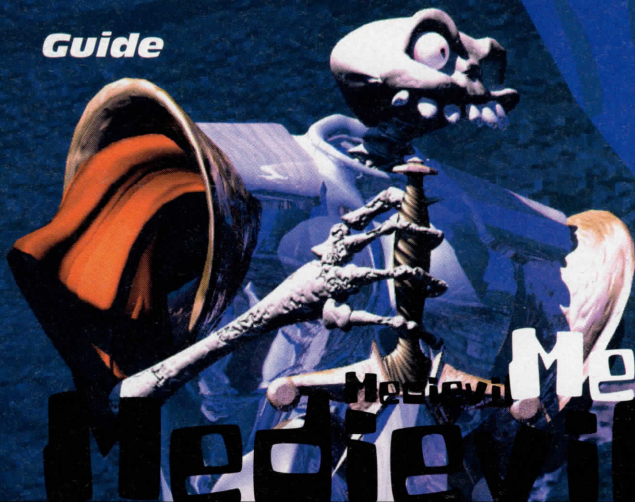
Greedy Gargoyles

Throughout the levels you'll encounter Gargoyles who offer help and goods for you to buy. Those bearing items can supply you with crossbow bolts and throwing knives, as well as giving you the chance to buy yourself a new Small Sword if it gets nicked by an imp. All very useful if you have the cash to hand over!



leads to the Mayor's house which can be entered via the chimney on the roof. Use the Safe Key to get the Shadow Artefact from the safe, hit the switch and then exit through the door. There is a hole in the high wall near the door which leads to the Chalice and a life bottle. Go back to the main fountain and take the path which leads to a wide bridge and four waiting guards. Beat them into the ground and go through the gate.





Medieval



THE ASYLUM GROUNDS

This is the garden of Zarok and nothing is as it first seems or so the book says. Follow the pathway down into the gardens and under the hedge archway. Here you'll be attacked by a hedge dragon and a couple of nutter gardeners. Take the left-hand route, as this is the only path open, and talk to Jack of the Green. He gives you the following riddle:

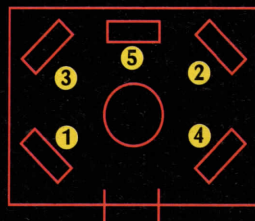
At night they come without being fetched.
By day they are lost without being stolen.

The riddle is referring you to stars – five of these are to be found around the maze garden. Walk away from Jack and go into the maze opposite. Turn right at the first junction and follow the path to find the first star. Strike it with your weapon. Follow the path back round and take the first left after the steps. When you've fought the crazed gardeners, you'll find star number two next to the bell. Dash at the now blocked entrance to the area to break down the hedge to get out, go straight ahead and you'll find star three. Go back out and to the Unicorn where you first entered the level and you'll find the fourth star behind it. Go back under the archway, and straight ahead you'll find the final star. Go back to Jack to get the next riddle:

I live for laughter.
I live for the crowd.
Without it I am nothing.

Here the riddle is about a clown, make your way back into the maze and you'll find a new path open near the section with the bell. At the end of the path is

a clown-shaped hedge surrounded by five tablets bearing the laughter/sadness faces. You have to rotate the tablets so that laughter faces the clown, you turn them by hitting them with a sword or hammer. Position all the tablets so that one more hit will make them



face the centre. Then hit them in the order shown below. The reason for this is that when they face the centre they will turn once more by themselves after a period of time which is different for each.

Back to Jack for the next fine riddle, which is:

Face like a tree,
Skin like the sea,
A great beast I be,
Yet vermin frighten me!

This time we're talking elephants. Return once more to the maze to find another new section open. Here you'll find a rune, just past the fire chucking octopus, which can be used to open the gate to the rear of that Unicorn from before. Opening the gate releases a small white mouse – he'll follow you wherever you walk but he can only move slowly. Go straight across at the crossroads and through the now-open gate – at the far end you'll find a large elephant-shaped hedge. Lead the mouse here and the riddle is solved. Right, next riddle:

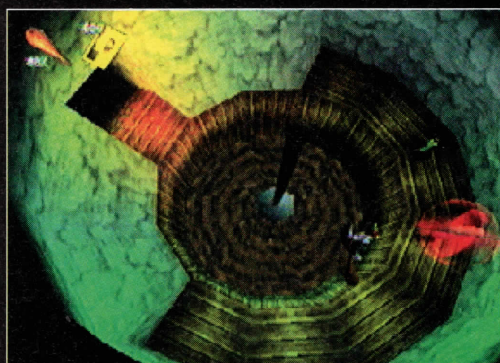
I tolerate the moon and stars,
I can't abide the sun,
Banish me with torch light,
And you'll see me turn and run.

Darkness is the new subject, so off we go back to the elephant! Go down the path that the elephant created when it reared up and you'll find an open trapdoor. Down below is a pit with a door, through which are three fires burning on top of blocks. Push the blocks against the walls so that they light the round windows – you'll hear a harp sound for each. Enter the pit and stand in the light to be transported back to the maze outside. Visit Jack one last time and he'll grant you free run in the maze, which you should now enter again from behind the elephant. Along here you'll find a new section which leads between the legs of a man-shaped hedge. The next puzzle is very simple: hit the chess pieces to make them move and position them on the matching coloured squares. Do this and an exit opens in the centre of the board, so jump in.

INSIDE THE ASYLUM

This level has more than a passing resemblance to Smash TV, with mass attacks from hordes and hordes of zombies. Use the Warhammer or Broadsword's charged attacks to take out the zombies in larger numbers and to give you some space. After the each onslaught go through the exit which opens. One of the rooms has a Gargoyle – he can enchant your sword to give it much more power, and all for a mere 100 coins, so take up the offer. Eventually you'll find yourself in a room with lava flowing down the centre – stay out of





the lava at all costs. When you kill all of the enemies go through the door at the rear to collect the Chalice and an Earth Rune. Open the gate to free the Mayor. Collect the Dragon Gem and exit via the door at the rear.

PUMPKIN GORGE

When you enter the level make your way along the path and head into the cave on the right to collect the Moon Rune and a club. Continue through the cave and turn right after you drop down on to the path again. When you reach the buildings open the door to the house nearest to you as you approach. Here you find the Chaos Rune, but to get to it you must drop on to the circular platform below you. To make the platform rise run in a clockwise direction. Collect the Rune, leave and go up the ramp to get some goodies. Next go through the large gate using the rune to open it. Just to the left on the other side of the gate is a health fountain, so top up your energy. Go through the gate on the far side of the compound and jump on the mushrooms to get along the ravine. The path at the end to the right leads to the Earth Rune and back in to the compound. Open the gate next to the building in the centre and make your way up the slope, slashing the pumpkins as you go. At the top collect the Star Rune and the life bottle. Smash the large boulder blocking the hut entrance and enter within to find yourself back at the bottom. Go back along the mushroom ravine but this time take the path that leads straight ahead.

When you reach the large plant slash at it's shoots as they pop up to lower the main branch and to get the Time Rune. The rune opens two gates at the rear both leading to the exit via a big mushroom.



THE PUMPKIN SERPENT

Note: Before you enter this level make sure you've got the Witch Talisman from Cemetery Hill. Just before you enter the main area you'll see a wooden tub next to the gate with plant shoots in. When you've defeated the Pumpkin Serpent the shoots will have gone and you can reach a secret area below. Here you'll find a number of useful items. Also near the start is a cauldron – use the Witch Talisman here to summon the Pumpkin Witch before wasting the Pumpkin King. To wake the Pumpkin King you must mash all his pod sacks. The sacks look like pulsing green lumps on an exposed root. There are a number of these dotted around the level but they aren't hard to find. Once you've got old veggie head out of bed simply stand back and attack his large head with the crossbow. Not difficult at all. Go back to the witch and receive a Dragon Gem. Stick around to kill enough bad guys to collect the Chalice and then leave the level via the path leading away from the Pumpkin King's remains.

THE ENCHANTED EARTH

Take the right-hand path at the first split and follow it around, turning right at the pond. Climb the steps and hop onto the lift which will take you to the trees above. When you get to the top use the fungi ledges to reach the bird's nest on top of the large stump. Roll the eggs out of the nest to get the

Earth Rune and a few other items. Watch out for the big bird's claw which tries to swipe you away. When you've have collected the rune take the lift back down to the bottom, using the health fountain if you need it. Take the first left as you pass the pond again and open the gate. Simply jump across the platforms avoiding frog fire and you'll find the entrance to a cave. Use the Shadow Artefact to open the doors and head on in. You need to stand on the symbols in this order:



You now have access to the Chalice and the Shadow Talisman. Pick up the talisman and head up the slope which leads to a circular symbol – stand on this to get out. You can return later to pick up the Chalice. To Dan's right is the level exit, but it requires the Star Rune to unlock it so remember this place for future reference. You now have a few hard nasties running about, so equip Dan with the Broadsword for maximum power. Go to the small pond and you should see a pillar with an indent the shape of the talisman next to two statues. Use the talisman to deactivate the statues. Walk between the statues and jump onto the platform to get the Star Rune. You'll now have to fight the two Shadow Demons.





THE SHADOW DEMONS

The toughest of the bosses to date (as you would expect). Stay in the centre of the platform as from time to time the demons will hit the platform making it tilt. Use the Crossbow or Longbow if you have them but only fire when the demons are stationary to avoid wasting ammo. Use your shield to protect yourself from their fireballs and then retaliate with venom (not literally!). Try to pick on one of the demons and then work on the other when it's alone. At some point they start dropping rocks from above, which aren't too hard to avoid, but if in trouble duck. When you've won you'll be taken to the top where you can replenish health and pick up a few life bottles along with some cash. Drop down the hole at the end of the path and head for the exit.

POOLS OF THE ANCIENT DEAD

There's plenty of water in this level so you'll have to be particularly careful not to fall in or be pushed in by the numerous undead soldiers toddling around. The fat soldiers are heavily armoured so use a powered-up Warhammer to push them into the water. The skinny chaps can be killed but they will chuck axes at you. The first task is to talk to the Boat Man who can be found to the left after you pass the first tower. When making your way around the tower jump up the rear of it to get a handy life bottle. The Boat Man asks you to find eight lost souls which can be found lying around on the other side of the castle. The lost souls are just gold-coloured Helmets which aren't hidden and are thus easy to find. Also to be found in this area is the Chaos Rune – use this



to open the gate on the opposite side of the section which leads to another area with life bottles and another Helmet. When you collect this Helmet a gate closes behind and numerous enemies appear – you have no choice but to kill these guys to get out. Use the broadsword on the thin fellas and then power up the Warhammer to knock the fat blokes off the edge. When you have all the Helmets return to the Boat Man and use them so that he takes you for a boat ride out of the level.

THE LAKE

Leave the safety of the boat and head up the steps. Carefully walk along the platforms dodging the strange fish leaping out of the water. You'll come to an L-shaped section of pink walkway – remember this location for future reference. Continue following the jetty until you reach a building. On the side of the building is an eye. Run past the eye when it closes to avoid summoning nasties – you'll encounter a number of these eyes in the level. When you pass the building you'll find another eye on the house opposite – again you have to avoid being spotted, but this time just keep your distance and wait for the eyes to close. The next building has an eye which fires at you. You can destroy these types of eye but not the spotter eyes. Keep going to the right and you'll find two openings in a building. Enter the building and go out the far end. This brings you out by the level exit.

Collect the Chaos Rune from the large boat near the waters edge and go back through the flooded building.

Go down to the water and collect the Earth Rune from the end of the short jetty. Go all the way back to the pink L-shaped section of walkway and hit the wooden lever twice to rotate the L-shape floor. This opens up a new route which leads to a large circular section of pathway surrounding a large whirlpool and a load of lizard-like bad guys. Walk to the left on to the circular path – the first section leads to a health fountain. Visit each section leading off from the main path and place a rune in each of the three huts. Once all the three huts have been switched on you can jump into the now-frozen whirlpool. Collect the shield and life bottles and then head off along the tunnel passing beneath the floating pink sea elephants (?) and into a room in which the Chalice awaits collection. Run through the other door and you'll be back on dry land. Use the nearby bridge and collect the Star Rune from the puddle in the middle of the ruined building in front of you – the entrance is at the rear. Near this building is a fence which you can get round at the end furthest from the waters edge – this allows you to get to a lever. Strike the lever to open a gate and then cross the bridge behind the gate. This leads you back to the rotating section of pathway. Strike the lever twice and head on back to dry land. Head to the right through the building again and open the exit on the other side.





THE CRYSTAL CAVES

The caves are, as you would expect, filled with crystals. The first thing that you meet is a group of flying beasts hurling fireballs at you. They don't fire very often so you have plenty of time to shoot them down with a few arrows. Moving into the caves you come to a junction with a path to the left and one straight on. Down the left route is the Chalice which is visible from where you are. You won't have wasted enough enemies yet so you'll have to come back for the Chalice later. Head on down the path in front of you and through the archway. Smash the crystal to proceed and then turn right just after. A little further along you'll find a path which leads to a spinning crystal – watch out for the imp trying to nick your weapon on the way. At the far side of the crystal is the Earth Rune. Dodge the light rays to get through to the rune and leg it back out again. Go down the passage to the right of the spinning crystal and into an open area. Smash the chest to cause an explosion to rid the room of bats. Go to the right of the chest and two Rhinotaurs burst out of the crystals. These fellas have big clubs so don't get caught by them, use the Warhammer to smash them apart. In the next room is a slope leading upwards with a health fountain at the bottom. As you climb the slope be prepared for more Rhinotaur attacks. Open the gate at the top with the Earth Rune and enter.

Go to the left and through the waterfall and jump across the platforms to get the Star Rune. Place the two Dragon Gems in the eyes of the dragon on the wall to

summon the mean old dragon. When you fight him you have to hammer the ground to make rocks fall on his head. The rocks fall near the hole to the right of where you hit the ground, so when the dragon sticks his head out make sure you're on the left of him. When defeated he'll give you the Dragon Armour which protects you from heat and allows you to breathe fire! Now go back through the waterfall again and go straight ahead and fight off the few Rhinotaurs, then proceed past the deep pool. Watch out as the lighter-coloured blocks give way. Whack the next batch of nasties and drop down the shaft at the end. Turn left at the bottom and you'll see you're back a cave entrance. Continue straight on and use the Earth Rune to raise the pla

GALLIOWS GAUNTLET

Things start to get weird from here with zombies legging it around with a stake through the heart. These beasties try to stab you with their stakes but only attack when you get near. The best way to off these guys is to lob stuff like knives and arrows at them from a distance. Head on into the level and you'll meet a large mummy whose not too pleased to see you. Just beyond this handaged foe is a couple of gallows which spring to life and swing their hanging corpses at you. Get used to this lot as you're going to see more.

Further on you'll find the level exit: DON'T use it, go past and you'll find a magical barrier of fire. Use the Dragon Armour and walk through the barrier, stand on

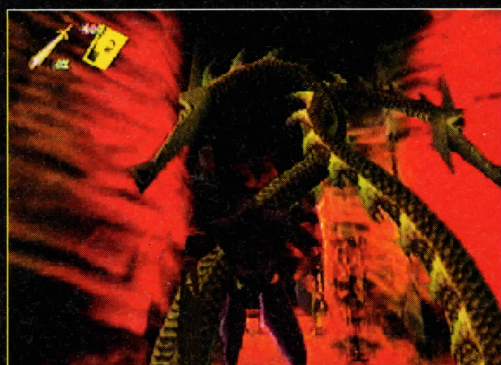
all four of the buttons on the floor to open up the gates dotted around the level. Go back through the fire barrier and go straight ahead. Just past a peg in the wall is a gate which requires the Star Rune to unlock it.

Hall Of Heroes

Once you've paid homage to all the heroes on the second floor the main door opens to reveal one more statue.

Behind the Main Door
LIGHTNING BOLTS
- Lady through door.

From this point on when you visit the hall you receive either cash or life bottles from various statues.



Medievil



The rune can be found back near the start of the level in an alcove in the wall along with other goodies and the Chalice. Collect the rune and unlock the gate – this takes you to another level exit which allows you to get to the Haunted Ruins.

HAUNTED RUINS

To gain entry to the castle you have to lower the drawbridge. The switch for the bridge is under the farthest pile of grain. To clear the grain scare the chickens so that they run up towards the grain and then leave them to eat it. When they've scoffed enough the drawbridge drops down. Enter the castle and climb the wall on the left just past the gargoyle. Go left at the top and collect the Chaos Rune then go back to the right. You have to kill the Shadow Demons before they can sacrifice the farmers held in the courtyard. The best weapon to use is the Magical Longbow as this allows you to attack from long range and is powerful. Once you've killed the demons press the button at the far end of the yard to free the farmers. The Chalice can be found at the top of the slope through the gate next to the button if you wish to get it.

From the courtyard go through the gate at the opposite end of the courtyard and fight off the demons. Dodge the cannonballs and head up the large set of steps. To the right at the top is a life vial – collect it and continue along to the far side of the wall and jump down into the courtyard. Fight off the mace-wielding knights and then open the gate with the Chaos Rune. Equip yourself with the Dragon Armour before running across the bridge to protect you from the fire. Enter the castle and drop through the floor in front of the throne. Take a left at the first split and go through the door to



collect King Peregrin's Crown. Go back on yourself and through the door on the other side. Top up your health at the fountain and then continue on. Go back into the throne room and use the crown next to the throne. The King will appear and then send you to a lever. Strike the lever to open a gate holding back lava and then you have to fight two Stone Golems. Use the Dragon Armour for safety and push the Golems off the edge at the top of the screen with your fire breath. Be quick as you have a time limit to get out of the castle. Beat the Golems and grab the Earth Rune, run through the two gates and then enter the doorway just after the second gate. Use the Earth Rune to turn off the tar flows and exit the room. Follow the castle room around to the other side and hit the switch next to the catapult. This will chuck a boulder at the far wall, breaking it. Now stand on the catapult to be thrown out of the castle.

THE GHOST SHIP

It's all aboard for this level, fighting off skeleton pirates and finally facing the evil Zarok. The crew are controlled by a few officers, so attack these guys to save time. The officers are easy to spot as they're dressed in fetching blue coats. To start with you need the Moon Rune from the mast, so run to the right and then back to the left and up to the mast to pick it up. Go back down and use the rune to open the cabin door. Collect the Star Rune from inside the cabin after killing off the pirates. Go back out on deck and head towards the flapping trapdoors. You have to get across to the other side – don't worry if you fall as you'll just appear in a room below with a two crew members. Once on the other side go up the slope leading up the screen dodging

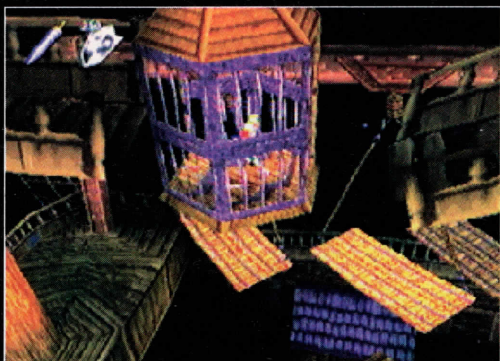


the barrels. Use the rune to open the gate. Run through and drop down to the level below.

Take out the officer to dispose of the pirates and then head down and to the right. Jump over the cannonballs and grab the rune. Now you can go back and open the other gate where you've just come from. Go through the gate and make your way across the gap using the netting to jump on. If you fall through you have to fight a couple of pirates and then do some cannonball dodging through a room which leads back to the top. When you reach the far side either go downwards and jump across the hatch doors to get past the cannons or jump across the swinging platforms. The next task is to jump on to one of the rotating platforms – missing here is instant death! The easiest way, if you jumped across the hatches, is to stand at the edge and walk forward as a platform comes round. If you want to get to the Chalice then jump into the cage halfway round and ride it to the top, go to the left and the right. If you don't get the Chalice then jump off the rotating platform to the right. You'll now be attacked by a mass of pirates so keep moving and remember to pick on the officers. Use the gargoyle to stock up on supplies and repair your shield. Collect the club from the chest and then go through the gateway to face the Pirate Captain himself.

PIRATE CAPTAIN

The Captain is far too tough for your weapons to be effective so you have to use some other means. Light up your club in the fire and walk into the cannons to fire at him. Make sure you don't stand in front of the cannons as they fire as you'll be hit – as if you wouldn't





have guessed! When the pirates come to life change weapons to save the club and then fight them off. When you got rid of the skeleton seafarers go back to whacking the old Captain with the cannonballs. When you bump him off walk to the bow of the ship to complete the level but the game is not yet complete!

THE ENTRANCE HALL

Enter the castle and go through the hall with the floating balls. Along the way you'll meet a few imps, but if you've got the Magic Sword one swipe is enough to dispatch them. Through the archway there are two paths to choose from. To the right and down the stairs is the Chalice and plenty of imps willing to steal your weapons. Hint: equip Dan with the Dragon Armour as they can't steal this. To the left through various passages and hallways (and many imps) is the level exit.

THE TIME DEVICE

Smack the lever to open the first gate and enter the Time Device area. Here you'll find a few soldiers to attack you and a couple of floating eye things. Nasty! In front of you is a large clock. To get onto the clock jump on the round sponges to get extra height. The two coloured buttons adjust the time on the clock. Follow the path off to the left of the clock and work your way round the smaller clocks to collect the rune. Go back onto the large clock and use the rune at the gate above it. Approach the far gate and a flying clock will appear, note the time and go back to the main clock and set the time to match. Go back and the gate will now be unlocked. Through here is a large rotating machine with knife-wielding arms. On the far side is a path which leads to a Chaos Rune surrounded by stone wheels.

Grab the rune and run back to the machine, go down the other path which leads to a pipe on the side of a building. Stand under the pipe and jump into it. At the top of the steps is a skull door knocker on a white slab – strike this to switch off the electric current and then quickly strike the bronze conductor to the left before the timer runs out. This prevents the electric fields returning and allows you to get to the Chalice. Step on the triangular platform to the left to reach the cash and then jump down to the ledge on the left to get the Earth Rune. Use the bridge to get back to the pipe and return to the spinning machine.

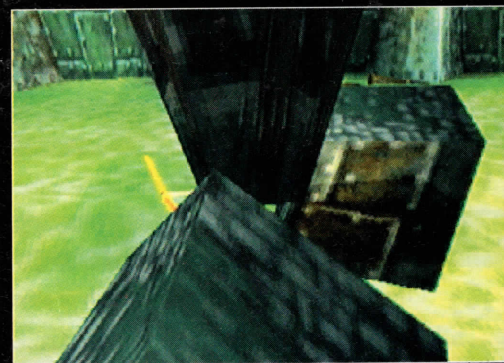
Go down the path that leads to a large set of gates. Kill the two guards and place the rune in the holder to open the gates. Inside use the other rune to open the gate and then rotate the train to face the now open gate. Take care not to fall down the gap. The train can be moved by pushing the clock hand that sticks out from underneath it. Hop on the train and ride it to the next station. As soon as you get off kill the two soldiers pelting you. Jump up to the upper level and collect the Moon Rune guarded by three soldiers. Ride the train back to the main station and open the other gate with the rune. Fight off the guards which appear and then rotate the train again. Take a ride once more through the unlocked gate. At the end is a much-needed health fountain to regain some energy. Run down either side of the track and strike the two levers to open the third gate in the main station. Go back to the station on the train and rotate the turntable once more so that you can ride on to the next level.

ZAROK'S LAIR

Dan finally has to face the evil Zarok in his lair. When you enter the arena collect the shield and Good Lightning from

the chests. Walk into the centre of the arena and stand on the shield to place the Chalice. Zarok appears and summons an army of skeleton warriors to fight you. The Chalice releases heroes to fight the evil warriors but you must keep them 'alive' by zapping them with the Good Lightning. You want to keep the good guys coloured green – zap them when they start to turn orange or yellow. Eventually the good guys will win and any leftover fighters will be turned into Life Bottles. You now have to fight Zarok's champion, Lord Kardok. This guy is tough – he rides around on a skeleton horse and is very quick. You're best bet is to use the Magical Longbow to start with and then move on to the Lightning Attack (not the Good Lightning) when you run out of arrows. Try to stand behind or to one side of the champ as when his horse rears up he fires lasers at you, but only from the front. Save the Life Bottles for when you need them and try not to pick any up if you're at full energy or you'll be wasting valuable resources. After you beaten the champ, Zarok goes off to cast a few spells and returns as a bizarre-looking dragon. Now it's time to fight the master!

If you have any Magical Arrows left then use them, otherwise strap on the Dragon Armour and get in close with the fire breath, as this does masses of damage. Most of Zarok's attacks consist of fire breathing or trampling you. Keep dodging around and breathing fire up close, but if Zarok rears up and erupts into a huge fireball just leg it or you'll be fried alive! He'll also chase you about a bit whilst in this state, but luckily it doesn't last long. When you finally bring Zarok down he admits defeat but isn't willing to go out without taking you with him. The ceiling starts to fall and the whole place begins to fall apart. Prepare for the end sequence!



IT'S A FUNNY OLD GAME!

ACTUA SOCCER	GREMLIN	1-4
 Was once the best, but has been eclipsed in recent years.		80%
ACTUA SOCCER CLUB EDITION	GREMLIN	1-4
 Nothing new apart from more teams. Poor effort.		70%
ACTUA SOCCER 2	GREMLIN	1-4
 Could have improved over the previous games vastly. A bit of a let down but nonetheless still very good.		85%
ADIDAS POWER SOCCER	PSYGNOSIS	1-4
 Do football games really need special moves?		65%
ADIDAS POWER SOCCER 97	PSYGNOSIS	1-4
 Exactly the same as the original with new teams.		55%
ADIDAS POWER SOCCER 98	PSYGNOSIS	1-4
 Getting there, but still nothing special.		70%
ALL STAR SOCCER	EIDOS	1-2
 Pathetic, poor, pap etc.		20%
FIFA 96	EA	1-4
 When FIFA games started to dip in quality and playability.		57%
FIFA 97	EA	1-4
 An improvement, but the famous FIFA playability still isn't here.		67%
FIFA: RTWC	EA SPORTS	1-4
 EA gets a grip and offers one of the best footy games yet.		92%
GOAL STORM	KONAMI	1-2
 No. Konami redeemed themselves later with ISS though.		20%
ISS DELUXE	KONAMI	1-4
 A port from the Megadrive this in no way uses the PlayStation fully.		62%
ISS PRO	KONAMI	1-4
 The people's favourite. No real life stats or players but the gameplay wins through.		90%

ISS PRO 98	KONAMI	1-4
 Faster, smoother and better looking than ISS Pro.		95%
KICK OFF 97	ANCO	1-2
 How to destroy a great licence.		35%
KICK OFF WORLD	FUNSOFT	1-4
 See above.		35%
LIBERO GRANDE	SONY	1-2
 Unique, original, playable and fun. Good enough for you?		89%
OLYMPIC SOCCER	US GOLD	1-2
 With the competition it's got, this game pales into insignificance.		45%
ONSIDE SOCCER	TELSTAR	1-2
 Another insignificant entry to a market crowded with quality.		40%
PLAYER MANAGER	ANCO	1-2
 Not half as good as Gremlin's Premier Manager '98...		55%
PREMIER MANAGER 98	GREMLIN	1
 The best football management game available.		90%
STRIKER 96	TIME WARNER	1-2
 Fast in the traditional Striker vein but the flaws don't do the title any justice.		74%
SUPER FOOTBALL CHAMP	MINDSCAPE	1-4
 Why bother releasing such sub-standard fare?		29%
THREE LIONS	BMG	1-2
 Worthy of a look but EA's World Cup bandwagon game is far better.		84%
WORLD CUP 98	EA SPORTS	1-4
 Arguably the best football game to date.		94%
WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER	EIDOS	1-2
 Worthy contender but lacks spark.		88%




Along with eventually meeting your maker, there's only one other certainty in life – and that is that new PlayStation football games will arrive, or be announced for the Playstation at the rate of at least one a month until the day you die. It's like we're caught in some soccer-based time loop; no sooner have we finished writing about one soccer game, than lo and behold, it's time to start on the next. Football games are a highly lucrative part of the market, so it's also an area of games that is also, highly contested.

The FIFA brand is by far the best selling football series across all formats, so much so that a FIFA game has been number one at Christmas for the past five years! The title has gathered so much momentum of late that EA Sports are about to release the third PlayStation FIFA game

within the space of a year. Is it a case of overkill or merely a masterful marketing move?

Well, with the numbers that are bought each year, we'd go for the latter. This is no dig at the FIFA brand though, ever since *Road To The World Cup*, the games have been arguably the best soccer games on the PlayStation. There are plenty of other contenders though; *Actua Soccer*, in its third season is looking a safe bet; Eidos' sequel to *World League Soccer* could go down well; *Viva Football*'s retro slant is a refreshing change and Sony's superb *Libero Grande* doesn't just break the mould, it kicks it into touch.

Having established that there are some great games pending, what should you get now? Here's STATION's guide to the best and worst of the current PSX football nation... 

NEW SIGNINGS:

If you have the best of the bunch don't worry, because predictably, there's a torrent of new football games on the way. STATION polishes its Crystal ball and looks into the future to see what football delights PlayStation owners can expect in the coming months:

ACTUA SOCCER 3

Superb simulation style game with the best commentary of the lot.

FIFA '99

If it can capitalise on the playability of the last two FIFA games it'll be a winner.

MICHAEL OWEN'S WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER '99

Great looking but the gameplay has yet to really prove itself.

SENSIBLE SOCCER 98/99

We've yet to see or play it but we do know that the original Sensible Soccer still reigns as one of the best games ever.

VIVA FOOTBALL

Retro football game which has superb playability to back up the almost novelty angle.

GREMLIN

1-4

EA SPORTS

1-4

EIDOS

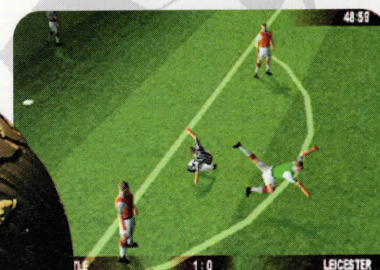
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GT INTERACTIVE


1-?

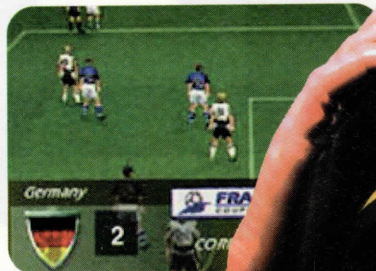
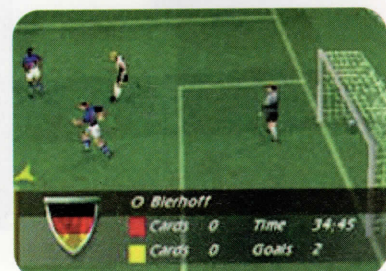
VIRGIN

1-4



WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS

Deciding which football game is the best is not as easy as it sounds. People look for different things in football games; stats and real life player names are demanded by hardcore football fans, whereas graphical finesses and playability wins through for the hardcore gamer. The latter is served by the superb *ISS Pro '98* whereas hardcore football fans will lap up *World Cup '98*. Both are great games and both very different from each other. It's here that personal opinion counts most, but just for the record *ISS Pro '98* is the best. Got any problems with that? 



THRILL KILLED

IN THEIR MOST BASIC FORM VIDEO GAMES ARE LITTLE MORE THAN EMPTY SLICES OF ESCAPISM, CREATED FOR OUR PERSONAL INTERACTIVE ENJOYMENT. YET THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO WOULD SUGGEST THAT THERE IS A DARKER SIDE TO BE AWARE OF IN THIS GROWING SECTION OF 90'S YOUTH CULTURE. ARE THERE DIRECT LINKS BETWEEN REAL-LIFE VIOLENCE AND THAT PORTRAYED UPON THE SCREEN? ARE WE SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE SEDUCTIVE POWER OF THE VIDEOGAME, OUR SANE MINDS DRIVEN MAD BY CONTINUED DOSES OF DIGITISED CARNAGE? DO WE NEED PROTECTION FROM THESE SHINY PIECES OF ENCODED EVIL? OR DO SOME PEOPLE JUST WANT TO KILL THE THRILL?

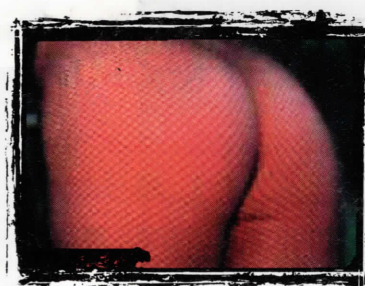
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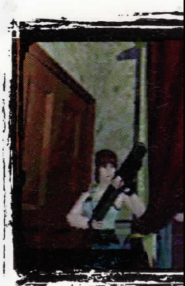
THRILL KILL
THRILL KILL
THRILL KILL



HARVESTER
HARVESTER
HARVESTER

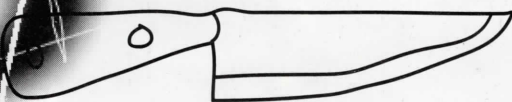


THE JOY OF SEX
THE JOY OF SEX
THE JOY OF SEX



RESIDENT EVIL
RESIDENT EVIL
RESIDENT EVIL

THRILL KILLED



EVIL
RESIDENT EVIL



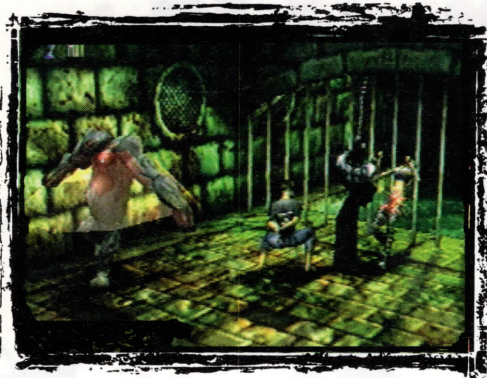
ARMAGEDDON
ARMAGEDDON
ARMAGEDDON



PHANTASMA
PHANTASMA
PHANTASMA



ARMAGEDDON 2
ARMAGEDDON 2



n a society as diverse as ours, with its multitude of cultures and moral inclinations, those seeking moralistic confrontation will inevitably find offence in any medium of entertainment. Be it the racial undertones of Enid Blyton or the subliminal messages

hidden amongst the rants of the average rock band, no medium of entertainment is safe, and no matter how harmless will

ultimately cause offence to someone, somewhere. The reasons behind these moral objections are as diverse as the causes. The most obvious examples being music and films, both of which have been held up as the cause of society's many ills. Yet recent events have indicated that to many people the torch has been passed, and the new bearer of society's miss-givings these days is in fact the games industry. →



IN REALITY, VIOLENT VIDEO GAMES ARE LESS VIOLENT TO PLAY THAN TO CONTEMPLATE, SINCE THE FOCUS IS ON BEATING THE MACHINE RATHER THAN ANOTHER HUMAN FIGURE.... AND THE VIOLENCE IS MORE SYMBOLIC THAN REALISTIC, WITH NOTHING LIKE THE IMPACT OF VIDEO VIOLENCE, WHERE ONE IDENTIFIES IN A HUMAN WAY. HERE THE EMOTIONS ARE MORE LIKE A GAME OF PING PONG THAN A BLOODY BATTLE.

Extract from the 1995 BBFC Annual Report

THE CHOPPING LIST

Titles that have attracted the unwanted attentions of the censor over the last two years:

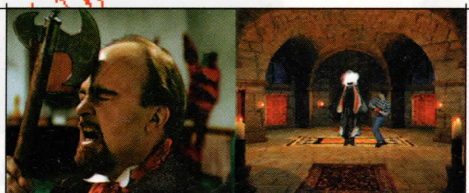
#1 CARMAGEDDON

SCI's racer, was originally banned by the BBFC. The content of the game, taking a seat behind the wheel of high powered sports cars, and basically killing innocents for points, proving a little too unpleasant. The ban was later over-ruled by the court of appeal, with the game finally released having been awarded an 18 certificate.



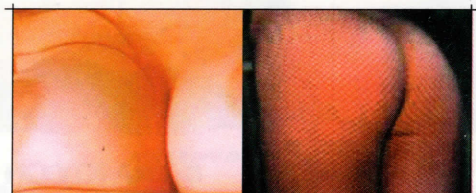
#2 HARVESTER

Virgin Interactive's PC FMV adventure, was only granted an 18 certificate after extensive editing of a sequence showing a trio of demonic children tearing chunks of flesh from the inner thigh of their mother. The positioning of the camera lent the sequences an almost sexual quality... snip!



#3 THE JOY OF SEX

Educational software for the ill-fated Philips CD-I. Due to the frank sexual content of the title, demonstrating various ways to get the most from a spot of nookie, the title was subjected to numerous cuts, removing close ups of sexual organs. Doh!



ELECTRONIC ARTS ACQUISITION OF VIRGIN INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT'S WESTWOOD AND IRVINE STUDIOS HAS BEEN COMPLETED. IN THE COURSE OF EVALUATING THE TITLES ACQUIRED, WE HAVE DECIDED THAT ELECTRONIC ARTS WILL NOT PUBLISH THRILL KILL NOR WILL WE SELL OR LICENSE THIS PROPERTY TO ANOTHER COMPANY THAT MIGHT BE WILLING TO PUBLISH IT. WE FEEL THAT THE PRODUCT DOESN'T MEET OUR STANDARDS FOR SUBJECT MATTER AND APPROPRIATE CONTENT.

EA's official statement on Thrill Kill

Proving to be the perfect scapegoat, the tabloids, ever vigilant in their constant battle to spread the truth to the masses, flaunt salacious news pieces describing the contents of the latest sick videogame nasties being distributed around the nation's playgrounds. Calling for the banning of such material or the introduction of new legislation to prevent our youth's exposure to such mind warping perversions. Although the more intelligent readers, those able to spell their own names, will see through the pretense of concern and

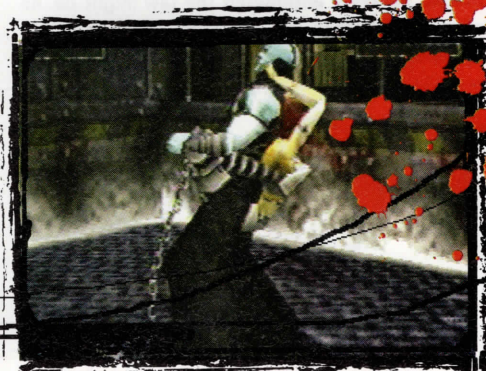
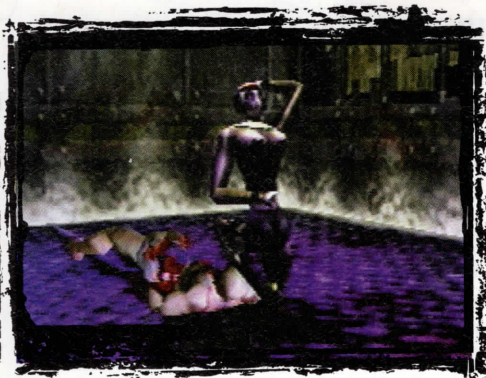
acknowledge the truth behind these oh-so-caring sentimentalities - bullshit sells.

Having established itself as one of the most popular forms of entertainment, particularly with young males, videogames have played their part in the corruption of numerous perfectly balanced individuals, or at least that is the picture painted in the average national newspaper. Yet closer examination of the article will reveal a very thin link between the real-life atrocities and videogames and far more blatant evidence of bandwagon jumping and what we like to term 'lazy journalism'.

SEX, DRUGS AND PLAYSTATIONS

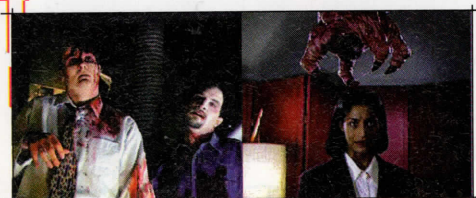
An offender having a copy of *Grand Theft Auto* in his games collection and thus his motive for stealing cars is explained, makes complete sense doesn't it?

Yet by placing this amount of emphasis upon these alleged catalysts to anti-social behaviour, the author often →



#4 PHANTASMA GORIA 2

Sierra On-line FMV adventure for the PC, went under the knife, removing the more graphic elements of this horrific romp. Cuts included the torture and eventual electrocution of a bound female, several shots from a scene involving a hand being pinned by a blade and graphic throat slashing.



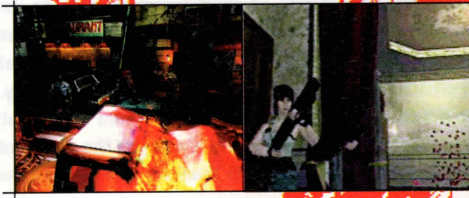
#5 POSTAL

Sensing problems with this brainless shoot-'em-up Take2 cut several sequences themselves before submission. Rumoured to have been removed are scenes featuring the shooting of pregnant females and young children. The heavily sanitised version still received an 18 certificate.



#6 RESIDENT EVIL

Capcom's epic portayal of the classic haunted house story contained a particularly unpleasant intro showing its Japanese origins. The blend of severed limbs and graphic bloodletting proved too much for the film censors, various cuts were made before the imposition of a 15 age limit.





does little more than enhance the allure of the very subject he is decrying. Instead of sending the potential viewer running scared not wanting to fall victim to the mind altering signals sent out from the evil software, the controversy serves to heighten interest, arousing consumer awareness of the game and enhancing its desirability. By seeking to protect us from ourselves, these warnings eventually only succeed in creating more publicity; the punters desperate to witness the horror that sent young Jimmy ape shit with a chainsaw in the same way that motorists will slow down to stare at a car crash.

Illustrating the absolute fallacy of the media fed backlash, during the early 1980's an enterprising film distributor, purchased the rights to a relatively unheard of gore epic, planning to release the title upon video, which was unregulated at the time. With only a very limited promotional budget, this individual happened upon an inventive scheme, taking a moral stand against the release of his own movie. The perfect sales pitch — costing virtually nothing but assuring huge coverage — several letters to the press, religious groups and moral guardians later, this unheard of lump of trash cinema was the name on everyone's lips, and naturally the

#7 SEX, DRUGS AND CENSORSHIP

Sensible Software's labour of love, *Sex n Drugs n Rock n Roll*, is unlikely to see the light of day following recent distribution problems. The highly inventive and polished game, follows the rise to rock stardom of Nigel Staniforth-Smythe with his band Magic. The plot deals with subject matter akin to the average rock star, as Nigel, with the aid of the player, takes part in the everyday routine of snorting coke, shagging groupies and last but not least singing.

Featuring huge amounts of bad language and some rather smutty animations, the game was surely destined to become a classic. Having poured vast amounts of cash into the development, which also featured 40 original tunes and six three minute pop promos, the distribution rights were put up for acquisition by the highest bidder. Alas, due to the current censorship climate, there were no takers. Fearing the imposition of censor cuts and the resulting cost of rescheduling and resubmitting, *Sex n Drugs n Rock n Roll* remained upon the proverbial shelf as opposed to the shop one where it belonged, and it will probably stay there.

Needless to say, Sensible boss Jon Hare has an opinion or two on the subject of censorship:

"The censorship issue with software is actually more complicated than it first appears. The best example I can give you is with our own

recently abandoned after 3 years game *Sex n Drugs n Rock n Roll*. *Sex n Drugs n Rock n Roll* was a game that was pure cartoon from start to finish with absolutely no FMV at all and it was designed from the very start to be a humorous adult adventure game, for sale to over 18s only. Once we had got to a stage where nearly 80% of the graphics and scripting were done we took a package of all of what we considered to be the most offensive bits of *Sex n Drugs n Rock n Roll* Cartoon Characters smoking joints, snorting coke, having sex in a sauna, lots of swearing and perverse language, slipping bananas up ladies skirts etc.) to a top quality obscenity and censorship barrister in London, the sort of guy who looks at 18 certificate films etc. all the time. He had spent some time looking at all our stuff before we went to see him and this is what he told us. None of the contents of the game were in any way legally obscene or unpublishable in any way except for two incidences where the content was judged to be blasphemous because they contained religious references in a less than reverential way. Both of these blasphemous elements were removed within weeks of this meeting as we had no desire whatsoever to produce any product that could be deemed illegal, however antiquated the law might be. He also added that he thought it was highly amusing and that he would be interested in



GAMES ARE DEVELOPING ALL THE TIME, IT'S PART OF A COMPLETELY NEW MEDIUM OF ENTERTAINMENT. I TAKE IT FOR GRANTED THAT REGULATION WILL BE DIFFERENT IN TEN YEARS TIME, BUT FOR NOW I THINK THE SYSTEM WORKS FINE.

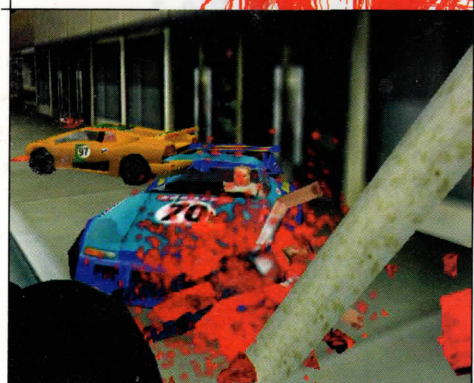
Andreas Whittam Smith: Head of the BBFC

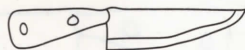
#7 SCRAPPLE BACK

Further delays in the classification process for a promotional four minute trailer for SCI's forthcoming *Carmageddon II: Carpocalypse Now!* has forced the company to turn to more drastic measures. Instructing their lawyers to seek a Mandamus Order against the British Board of Film Classification, forcing them to reach a decision upon the content of the trailer.

The following statement has been issued by Jane Cavanagh, Chief Executive of SCI:

"This repeat performance of last year's delaying tactics can only be a result of severe 'sour grapes' at the BBFC for losing the appeal last year. Why don't they just accept that on that particular submission they made a mistake and move on? The latest reason for delay is that they want to put the demo to a panel of child psychologists to determine what damage it might do. This is ludicrous as we're requesting an 18 certificate, which means it's designed for adults. Surely the best evidence of potential damage are the 'facts'. The fact is that the original has sold 600,000 copies throughout the world. Nobody has been damaged, on the contrary, we've received literally sack loads of letters saying how much everyone loves the game and how highly entertaining it is. A game doesn't go to the number one chart position and win Game of the Year unless it's a hugely popular and entertaining piece of work. Why don't they stop wasting tax payers money with such ridiculous practices?"





seeing a copy when it was finished. Very good you might think, but he did also warn us that although there were no legal problems with the product and that it was in fact very tame compared to most of the films he is asked to view, there may still be problems in getting it to market for commercial reasons and also that he was only advising us on British law and that every other country in the world has its own particular laws concerning censorship.

And therein lies two key problems. Games development is now very expensive and therefore in order to make back the money invested in the development of a game a publisher has to be able to sell that game in as many countries as possible. The UK is only a fraction of the market in games sales terms and the US, Germany and possibly Japan are all now seen to be far more important commercially not to mention at least another 50 countries around the world such as France, Italy, Spain, Australia, Brazil etc. in which good sales can be made. So for a game such as *Sex n Drugs n Rock n Roll* which was a big and expensive game to make it was very difficult to justify the continuation of a project that would possibly just be publishable in the UK. And although we had written the game all along bearing in mind that different levels of censorship and different humour might be necessary for different translations of the game into German, French and

American, it soon became clear that this process would probably end up being horrifically expensive and fraught with legal difficulty. In short it wasn't worth the aggro of going through the translation process bearing in mind the severe and very different moralities of the US and Germany which would probably make translation very expensive and would have ended up sucking the very soul out of the product.

It is easy for us in Britain to overlook the fact that we are actually one of the most broad-minded and tolerant countries in the world and not everyone else is like us. I now know this fact to my cost. There is a horrific double standard in people when they put on their professional hats concerning matters of censorship (lets call it the "It doesn't offend me, but it might offend my Mum" philosophy of life). I have lost count of the amount of people who I showed *Sex n Drugs n Rock n Roll* to who were fascinated by it and loved what they saw, finding it extremely entertaining. But when it came to actually signing the game up they weren't so sure how would it effect the company's profile with a naughty game like this on the books, even if it did have an 18+ sticker on the front and the average age of a PC owner is 27. And you see these doubts are enough to put people off. Making software is too expensive a business to make mistakes any more and *Sex n Drugs n Rock n Roll* is the kind of product that is seen to be a risk first

and a great product second. The problem for the publishers isn't that they don't like the product but that they just can't see a way of getting it into a retail environment that is so marketing gullible, pig ignorant and conservative when it comes to choosing what it stocks. Most people still associate computer games with kids, the concept of leisure software that is not necessarily a game is way over their heads, the idea of stocking a game that has swearing, joints and tits in it is simply unthinkable to the buyer for a major chainstore, who last year might have been doing a similar job buying fruit and veg for some supermarket. Do you think anyone in a senior position in an established retail firm would really want to risk their career for a product that just might cause one of the seedier tabloids to print a load of half-baked ignorant crap about them and bring his company into disrepute? Not a chance! Better to play it safe and climb the career ladder like every person employed by every publisher and retailer in the country. It's not the fault of these individuals, they are making sensible decisions to safeguard the future of themselves and their employers. But unfortunately this mentality is a byproduct of consumerism that means that we end up with more and more choice to buy more and more bland things as everyone tries to play it safe and toe the line... and that is fucking boring!

JON HARE: SENSIBLE SOFTWARE

movie - *Nightmares In A Damaged Brain*, made a mint. Not too dissimilar to the job that Max Clifford did in the 90s with *GTA*.

The launch of the home computer as with the launch of home video provided a new platform for public outcry. Spawned in the arcades, videogames made their way into homes, spreading their evil, addictive influence to a whole new audience. This being the general consensus of the media, whereas in reality the picture painted was a far different one, with the software at the time being about as offensive as a Blue Peter Christmas special.

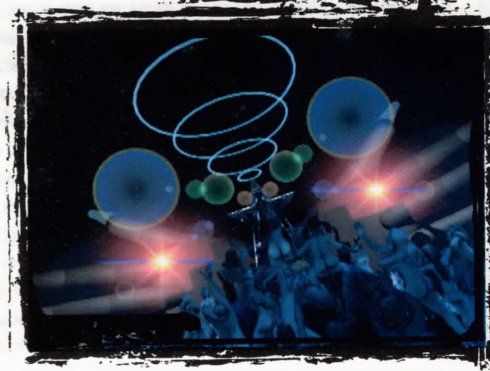
A SMALL STEP FOR MAN

The huge leap in technical capability between the first and second generation home systems meant that developers could take their audience to a whole new level of immersion and realism. Text-based adventures were the first genre to court the attentions of the official governing body, the British Board of Film Censors (BBFC). The character-driven narrative required greater player interaction, and the nature of the genre was also better suited to the older age groups. A fact further reflected by the content of these games. This more mature target audience meant that for the first time, the BBFC were brought in to award certain releases a legally enforced certification before they could hit the stores.



The classification of videogames took a step further in 1991, with the forming of the European Leisure Software Publishers Association Ltd (ELSPA). Working alongside the BBFC, the board judged the content of all software, awarding titles an age rating relevant to the subject matter.

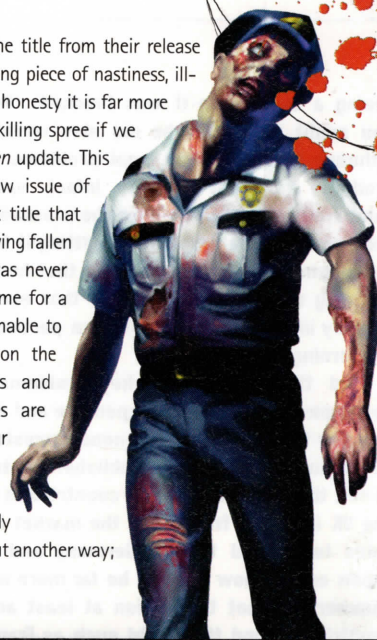

Unlike the BBFC Certificate, these ratings were little more than recommendations, not enforced by law, and the individual was left to make up their own mind. In certain cases the title was re-examined by the BBFC and if deemed unacceptable to a certain age group would receive the relevant legal certification. Yet as the once distinct lines between game and movie are slowly blurred, the BBFC have taken a far more prominent role in the world of interactive entertainment. As photo-realistic characters perform motion-captured violence upon one another, the degree of life-like material represented on screen has meant that the involvement of the film censor has become more and more necessary. And with only minor interference from both the BBFC and the ELSPA, the union between developer and the censor has become accepted as a not too intrusive factor in software development and publishing, and maybe one that shows that the industry is taking real responsibility for the influence it wields. →



Laurie Hall, Secretary General of the Video Standards Council

The removal of these FX having absolutely no detrimental effect upon the gameplay, or the most importantly the enjoyment of the game itself, we even signed it up to make an appearance upon STATION's cover and Demo CD, an indication of our hopes for the game. However, following the aquisition of the majority of Virgin's titles by Electronic Arts the

American company instantly dropped the title from their release schedule. Believing this highly entertaining piece of nastiness, ill-fitting with their usual output, yet in all honesty it is far more likely that we will embark upon a mad killing spree if we are forced to endure yet another *Madden* update. This kind of self-censorship is a whole new issue of course, especially for such a prominent title that was certain to have sold bucketloads. Having fallen at the first gate, *Thrill Kill*'s notoriety was never allowed to shine. Having played the game for a considerable amount of time, we are unable to agree to EA's overly moral stance on the product. The comic book characters and completely over-blown gore sequences are cartoon like, having no ill-effects upon our mental health and those around us. Having been given the green light from the official rating board, EA quite possibly buckled to perceived public opinion. Or put another way; they lost their bottle.



STATION were fortunate enough to interview, Mr Gianni Zamo, a leading member of the BBFC and one whose many responsibilities cover the classification of videogames.

GZ: My name's Gianni Zamo and I have been a film and video examiner at the Board since 1995. Whilst most of the Board's work is concerned with film and video classification, I have a particular responsibility for all digital media submitted to the Board for classification as required by the Video Recordings Act 1984

GZ: I am currently the proud possessor of a desktop PC and Sony PSX which, given my current job, has proven to be something of a necessity. I do play games and have done since the days of the 8086 PCs where I developed a deep fondness for *Leisure Suit Larry*, *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat* and *Missile Command* - sad, isn't it? Sadly, my children having taken virtual control of the PlayStation but they occasionally allow me on it and I enjoy the odd shot at *Tomb Raider*, *Resident Evil* and *TOCA*.

GZ: In classifying a PC or console game we bear in mind that game playing is an active rather than a passive experience. Film and video audiences are, in effect, merely observers of the unfolding drama before them and somewhat 'distanced' from what is happening. However, a good film or video will draw the viewer's mind if not body into the events occurring on the screen which is where the viewer's suspension of disbelief comes into play and willingly allows his emotions and feelings to be manipulated by the director. This can apply, rarely, to some games, except the player actually becomes part of the 'cast' of the game without whom it is actually rather useless. In this respect, games engage the user's interest at a very overt level in which physical and mental dexterity is more important than the engagement of emotion or feeling - the ultimate pleasure being that of having overcome a particular challenge or task; i.e. beating the machine whatever context that is placed in. With the individual focus being diverted in this way we tend not to take contentious elements such as violence more seriously than

Having said that, we must bear in mind how the relevant legislation (which we are duty bound to observe) applies to the game in question. If the game transgresses that requirement significantly then it may well have to be cut to remove the offending element or, more rarely, rejected. Additionally, a game's classification also depends on how 'balanced' it is. Do the positive elements of the game outweigh the negatives or vice-versa? A game which, for example, rewards anti-social behaviour without consequence is likely to be placed in a more restrictive category than one which gives free rein to aggressive impulses – *Carmageddon* being a prime example. The concern here is mostly to do with possible effects on impressionable children and younger people coupled to a psychological model which suggests that rewarding anti-social behaviour at an early stage of development is likely to have a lasting impact upon them in later life and, consequently, on the greater society at large. My previous experiences in the Probation Service would confirm this in some cases. Secondly, there is also a 'manners' issue at work in the classification of games. In essence, we try to assess what the reasonable parent would consider appropriate for their child at a particular age – a rule-of-thumb being the older the child the more tolerant the parent is likely to be. It follows, therefore, that the more aggressive, visceral games are unlikely to achieve lower ratings. Of course, opinions differ widely on what may or may not have a detrimental impact on the individual and it certainly can't be entirely blamed on films, videos or games. However, we are likely to err on the side of caution and, ultimately, we have to make a judgement based on what we see and how we experience the work before us. Inevitably, this isn't going to please everyone and will result in accusations of being either too liberal or too restrictive. However, it should be borne in mind that each work is treated individually and its merits or faults balanced against one another in making a final decision. There is no prescribed list of what is or isn't allowed, as each game is different from the last, irrespective of the fact that it may be the same genre.

GZ: It may well be, given the small amount of digital works we actually classify, that the future might involve self-regulation which, essentially, is what the BBFC was set-up to do on behalf of the film industry. How this works practically is another matter since I can see a time where games are simply downloaded from the Net rather than purchased as physical objects from retail stores. In this instance, of course, it is unlikely that any regulatory body could do much to control the material and the onus.

NO THRILLS, PLEASE.

From its initial announcement *Thrill Kill* had been obviously devised to gain self-publicity, sadly it succeeded in drawing a little too much attention to itself, and this ultimately proved to be its downfall. Admittedly the game itself was hardly destined to be a classic but the public were refused a chance to form their own opinions. It is currently unknown if the rights will be available to other distributors, but if a deal can be struck, those in possession of the game, will have an excellent ready made ad campaign, coming soon *Thrill Kill*, the game 'they' didn't want you to play. Can you hear the cash tills ringing? Of course Electronic Arts had the right not to release a game that was at the end of the day, their property. But why then did they sign it in the first place? What was their reason for dropping it? I refuse to believe it was over quality. After all, have you seen *Test Drive 4x4*? They must simply have decided that the game was way too subversive for their corporate image. What a shame. Now a great number of people may never get to see it. It would have made them a fortune, been a lot bigger than

IF PUBLISHERS WANT AN EASY, PROUBLE-FREE COMMERCIAL LIFE, PERHAPS THEY SHOULD AVOID VIOLENT GAMES THAT FOCUS ON DELIBERATE KILLING.

Member of the BBFC

therefore, would be on developers and distributors to develop their own 'conscience' and decide for themselves where the boundaries of excess lie.

Having said that, I suspect the BBFC will still be classifying games for some time to come as governments are notoriously slow at amending legislation or changing the 'status quo' for something which doesn't rate highly on their list of priorities.

STATION: Has any single title, been of particular concern to you?

GZ: There was a spate of games last year; *Carmageddon*, *Postal*, *Grand Theft Auto*, which moved away from the usual fantasy/sci-fi scenarios to contemporary real-life scenarios. As mentioned earlier, the issue of reward for anti-social behaviour occupied our thoughts for some time, particularly *Carmageddon* which positively urged the player to revel in the carnage and mayhem they could create. However, *GTA* and *Postal* were passed '18' uncut, though at first sight they appear innocuous enough, because there were consequences built into the game for engaging in anti-social behaviour.

STATION: During the rating process of SCI's *Carmageddon II: Carpocalypse Now*, you have employed a panel of psychologists to evaluate the possible impact of the game upon its audience, what were your reasons behind this?

GZ: Actually, our 'panel' consisted of one psychologist who was asked to assess the likely effects of such a game upon the individual. At this stage, we still await the outcome of this assessment. This is a common practice and not one reserved specifically for games. The Criminal Justice Act Public Order Amendment, in addition to the Video Recordings Act, requires us to: "...have special regard to any harm that may be caused to potential viewers or, through their behaviour, to society by the manner in which the work deals with criminal behaviour, illegal drugs, violent behaviour or incidents, horrific behaviour or incidents, or human sexual activity." It is worth noting that "potential viewers" means any person (including a child or young person) who is likely to view the video or game in question regardless of the fact that the category may be highly restrictive.

STATION: What are your thoughts on Electronic Arts' dropping of their beat-'em-up *Thrill Kill*. Did you find the game particularly offensive?

GZ: I was as much surprised as anyone else that the game has seemingly been 'ditched'. Having said that, I think the game would have been fortunate to have gotten through the Board unscathed - it's that darned sexualised violence thing again. Neither am I entirely convinced that a game featuring a bunch of karate-kicking asylum inhabitants would

the majority of their current PlayStation portfolio, and could only have been bought by people over the age of 18 years anyway. I'm afraid I'd like to be able to make my own mind up about what I do and don't want to play thank you very much. There were a lot of people who wanted and still want to play *Thrill Kill*, and now may never get a chance. I can't help feeling that this is wrong.

Censorship has its place in any form of media, there are certain images or ideals that have no place in general entertainment. The censorship of any material will naturally attract its critics, yet one must remember that governing bodies are a part of society, and their opinions, even if they may differ from our own, have to be heard, right or wrong. What we question is whether they have the right to enforce those opinions upon us. We aren't going to draw any conclusions about the censorship of videogames, that is up to the individual, and that is how we would like it to be left. Crimes committed by young offenders are always disturbing, but to place the blame for such hideous behavior upon a single medium of entertainment is simply far too convenient. Criminal behaviour has been around a lot longer than videogames. What do you think influenced Jack the Ripper? It must have been a book. Better ban all books then.

We don't need to be protected from ourselves by authoritative bodies. What we need to be protected from is authoritative bodies trying to make our minds up for for us. To me that kind of behaviour is far less acceptable than any computer program.

It is after all just a game and some would be advised to remember that.

have been welcomed with open arms in certain quarters. Personally, I wasn't greatly offended by its content and, to be honest, was quite disappointed by its limited scope.

This is a problem in general with beat-'em-ups, I feel. After the initial excitement of smooth graphics, specialty moves and wacky characters the kick-punch-chop routine soon loses its appeal.

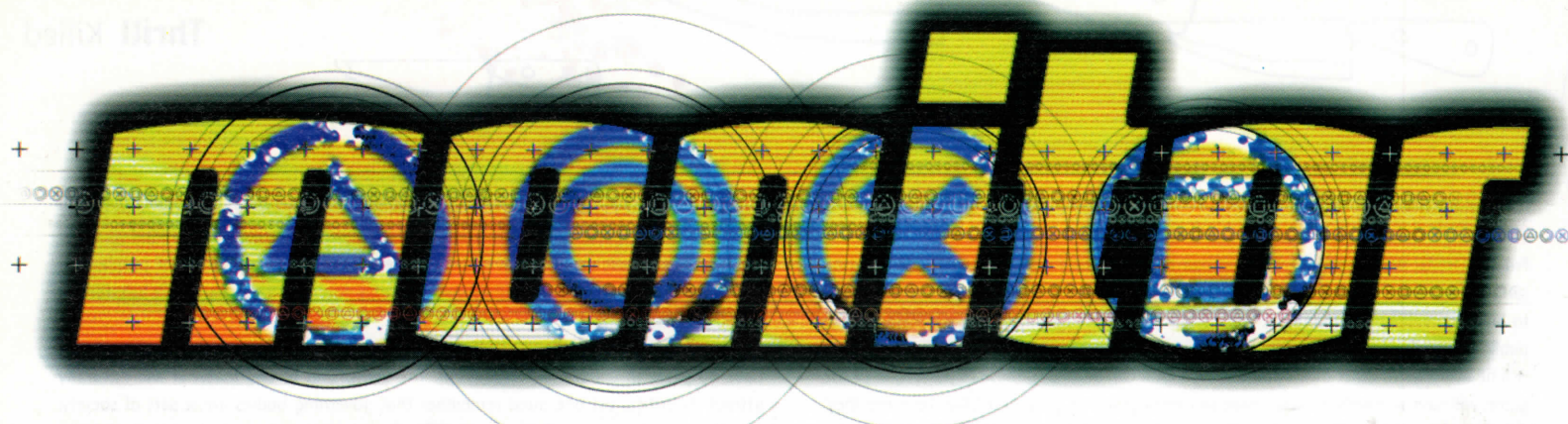
STATION: How closely do you work with ELSPA, concerning the classification of software?

GZ: I am in fairly frequent touch with ELSPA though mostly at the point where they recommend a game should receive 'formal' classification. Clearly the two systems are very different - theirs being voluntary ours being mandatory - but I think it works okay on the whole.

STATION: Do you have any thoughts on the current software market, and the continuing use of overtly controversial content as a selling point?

GZ: It's been a constant source of fascination to watch how games have developed both technically and in terms of content since the mid-eighties where, compared to today's stunning graphics and complex game construction, the games were rudimentary to say the least. However, beyond technological advances, it seems that games are very near to the ceiling in terms of genre and what the user can do with them - like films, there's a limited number of themes beyond which they all seem much of a muchness.

Imagination and invention seems to have been subsumed in favour of the 'quick thrill' approach which is fine but limiting, and often little more than a triumph of style over content; okay if you're paying two-pounds fifty to rent a video, but rather aggravating if you're having to part with nearly forty-pounds to buy a game. In terms of the 'controversial' banner headline used as a selling point, I am still amazed how easily the public are repeatedly taken in by often wildly exaggerated claims about such-and-such a game, but then I am reminded of a line in the film where a newspaper editor tells his tyro journalist: "When the facts become legend, print the legend." - obviously a watchword for marketing departments in the industry. This is not helped, I have to say, by some games magazines who eschew a factual, reasoned approach (probably because it looks boring to read) for the FMV/GQ/Loaded school of journalism where hype and hysteria seems all important. The ultimate 'fall guy' unfortunately, is the poor punter who's shelled out his hard earned money for a game on the basis of its 'controversial' nature only to discover that it's about as worrying (and as little more fun) as a wet weekend in Cleethorpes.



Your monthly handle on the changing face of PlayStation gaming

News Index: [page 118] Quake II [page 118] Resident Evil 3 - Destined for PSX [page 118] Downhill Mountain Biking - On a Roll [page 118] Dragon Valor RPG from Namco [page 119] South Park, Abe to Get Oscar [page 125] Final Fantasy VIII [page 118] Xena comes to PSX [page 124] Eidos releases Virmin [page 124] Rayman Returns [page 124] Namco [page 124]

Quake II first shots

With our rivals obviously quite content to pack their alleged previews of Activision's PlayStation conversion of id's classic first-person shooter, Quake II with endless PC grabs. It brings us great pleasure to unveil the first actual PSX shots. Currently in development from Hammerhead, the conversion is not simply a port of the non-accelerated PC code, but instead a stand alone version. Elaborating upon the basics of the PC game, recreating the visuals and the backbone of the level design, PSX Quake II will boast numerous new features and gameplay enhancements.

Whilst retaining the PC's excellent multi-player mode, albeit in split-screen not link-up, the many complaints concerning the limitations of the original single player game has marked the most prominent of the PlayStation enhancements. The PSX code features a non-linear mission based structure, with each area having its own perimeters and objectives, thus promising a far more satisfying gaming experience.

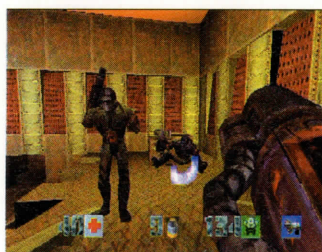
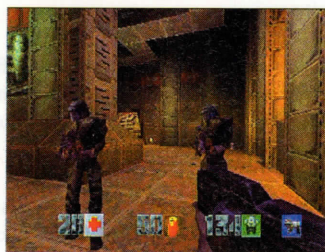
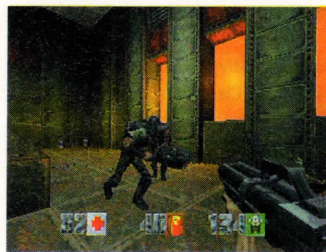
The engine that has been used to recreate the graphical excess of the PC version, does admittedly lack some of its counterpart's prowess, yet when put in comparison with such basic fare as Duke Nukem and Doom, the quality of the reproduction is highly commendable. The frame rate is wonderfully crisp and well-paced, complemented further by real-time lighting effects. With only a minor reduction in graphical detail ensuring no speed loss even during deathmatch play.

Having achieved classic status upon the PC, Quake II's reputation alone will draw huge receipts, but the quality of this conversion virtually assures the title a very warm reception from all.

Quake II is currently pencilled in for a February '99 release.

We'll have an exclusive demo on our next issue!

5



Resident Evil will rise again

After the disturbing reports that the third episode of Capcom's survival horror series - Resident Evil 3, will appear upon the Sega Dreamcast only. Capcom officials have been quick to rubbish such claims, instantly calling a press conference at the Tokyo Game Show. As one of the biggest selling franchises on the PlayStation, Capcom would be crazy to abandon such an obvious money spinner, and so acted to quickly to assure the gaming world that only are any rumours unfounded, they are also extremely stupid.

Although good news to all gore fans, details concerning this third installment are very thin, as one has come to expect from Capcom. Yet rumours suggest that the storyline may actually chart prequel territory detailing how the nightmare began, and not continue where the second game left off.

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BETA ZONE

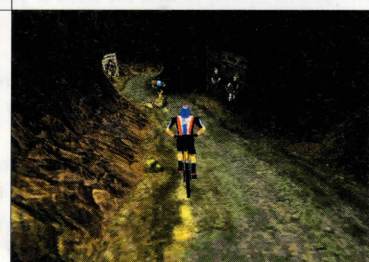
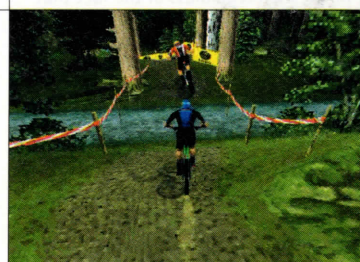
TITLE: DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKING

PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS

RELEASE: 1 QTR '99

Having established quite a reputation with racing fans, Codemasters take a break from the motorcar, seeking inspiration from the growing sport of mountain biking. Endorsed by the leading name in baggy trousers - No Fear, the game features a variety of landscapes to conquer and customisable cycles to ride. A perfect opportunity to become a lycra-clad champion pedal pusher.

5



INFO STATION



Lego of me PSX

Brick master Lego, expand its software output to the PlayStation. Their first title a *Mario Kart* style, *Lego Racers*. Having constructed your own Lego vehicle, the race can begin. The 12 tracks are based upon such unlikely locations as an asteroid – sounds fun.

Rearing a monster

Temco's hybrid of Tamagotchi and beat-'em-up *Monster Rancher 2* has been confirmed for European distribution. In it, the player is charged with nurturing and training a monster, to eventually fight them against other creatures. Think of it as virtual cock fighting.

Ridge Racer, Papa

Namco's fourth *Ridge Racer* title, may be forced to undergo a minor title change when released upon our shores. The R4 title conflicting with car giant Renault's latest motor, the R4. Therefore to prevent legal wrangles the title is most likely to change.



Namco chase a Dragon

Dragon Valor is a new action/RPG from arcade giants Namco. Differing from Namco's last foray into the genre; the distinctly un-inspiring *Tales of Destiny*, the game will be entirely polygon based. Blending puzzle elements and arcade style combat with the basics of the RPG, the game follows the exploits of a family of dragon hunters. Spanning several generations, the storyline is suitably epic in proportion to the likes of *Final Fantasy VII*.

The complex plot is somewhat open ended with the player's early decisions effecting the latter route of the unfolding story. During the early stages the lead will attempt to

attract the romantic attentions of one of a number of women. The eventual love match, determining the nature, emotions and psychic strength, of their off-spring. The fruit of their polygon loins will then become the central character when the torch is passed from the first generation to the next.

Namco's titles have rarely failed to impress. Yet if it is to go into direct competition with the likes of *Final Fantasy VIII*, *Dragon Valor* will have to be something very impressive indeed.

"Every year there is one game that everyone in the industry talks about. I think in 1999, *Dragon Valor* will be that game."

Mike Fischer: Director of marketing Namco (US)

Sweet Nothings

This month's nuggets from the world of PR speak:

"...super fast, ultra realistic...a racer of unparalleled playability, realism and technical innovation."

INFOGRAMMES: MAX POWER RACING

"...a fully interactive FMV adventure, using four CDs to maximise the PlayStation's capability for an interactive movie."

SONY: THE X-FILES

"...one of the PlayStation's most eagerly awaited games of the year...wrapped up in smart and stylised presentation."

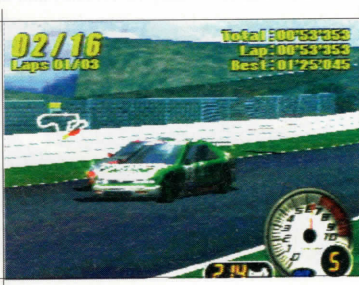
CODEMASTERS: BRIAN LARA CRICKET

"He's short, orange and has a big nose, but this hasn't stopped Crash from becoming one of the biggest personalities in history."

SONY: CRASH BANDICOOT: WARPED

TITLE: ADVAN RACING
PUBLISHER: ATLUS
RELEASE: APRIL '99

Well respected Japanese developers Atlus have set their sights on Sony's highly realistic racer *Gran Turismo* with their new release – *Advan Racing*. The early build shows a great deal of potential, realistic handling, a swift frame rate and GT style reflective. Sadly a European distribution deal has yet to be struck, but expect further coverage of this promising title soon.



TITLE: BLOODSHOT
PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM
RELEASE: 3 QTR '99

Boasting over 20 levels of comic book violence and huge explosions, the hero of this new 3D arcade shoot-'em-up from Acclaim's Iguana development team, is resurrected from the dead when millions of tiny microscopic organisms are injected into his corpse.

With numerous vehicles to drive, multiple weapons to fire off and a four player split-screen mode, *Bloodshot* offers much to entice the gung-ho gamer.



INFO STATION



Ronaldo hits it home

After a truly dreadful showing at the World Cup, Brazilian soccer superstar and top ugly bloke Ronaldo has still managed to secure himself a hefty pay packet from Infogrames, having been signed to promote their new footy sim, Ronaldo Football. Great title.

Infogrames Max it up

Infogrames latest racer, C3 Racing has undergone a title change and is now known as Max Power Racing. Having been endorsed by the popular boobs and motors magazine the game has been sent back into development for fine-tuning and plastic surgery.

No Dreamcast Tomb Raider

Core Design have announced that their busty heroine Lara Croft will not appear upon the Sega Dreamcast. Confirming their loyalties to Sony, Lara's fourth adventure most likely to appear upon the PlayStation 2, now that is a prospect.

ABE'S OSCAR

The CG animated footage featured in GT Interactive's Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus has been nominated for an Academy Award. Developers, Oddworld Inhabitants will be the first non-specialist animation company to be placed in the running for an Oscar. The animated short has been compiled using existing footage from the latest Oddworld outing, following the adventures of Abe and Co as they battle against the evil SoulStorm Brewery. This outstanding achievement will enter the history books, as the first Oscar nominated short feature to have been derived from a videogame. **S**



Goin' down to South Park

Acclaim have released early shots of their proposed South Park/PlayStation tie in. Gameplay details have emerged gleefully confirming our hopes that the surreal nature of the TV show wouldn't be lost in the console version. It would appear that a comet is on a collision course with South Park, worse still; the gravitational effects of the imminent disaster have turned the turkey population against humans. Adopting a first-person viewpoint, the player assumes the role of one of the South Park faithful in a desperate attempt to end this fowl reign of terror. The plot sinks even

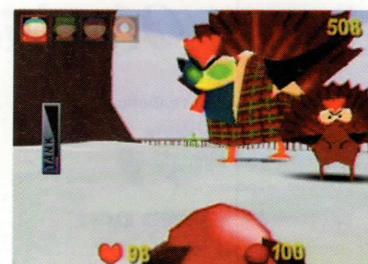
deeper into the realms of insanity as the player discovers that Cartman's mom has been abducted by alien visitors and the legendary Skuzzebutt, a bigfoot-type creature who has a stick of celery for a right arm and Dallas star Patrick Duffy for a left leg, is on the rampage.

All the familiar faces will be making an appearance in the final code as will a huge array of famous samples and catch phrases from the subversive cartoon series.

And yes the multi-player deathmatch mode, will indeed allow you to kill Kenny... you bastards! **S**

"We are excited to collaborate with Acclaim on this project and to extend the South Park humour to the interactive entertainment world."

Larry Lieberman: Comedy Central US



TITLE: ARMY MEN 3D
PUBLISHER: 3DO
RELEASE: MARCH '99

A 3D retelling of the classic 3DO title, Army Men 3D adopts the same basic premise of before, toy soldiers battling for supremacy in their miniature world. The third-person action involves the player taking command of a squad of four characters, their goal being the takeover of the opposing armies by means fair or foul.

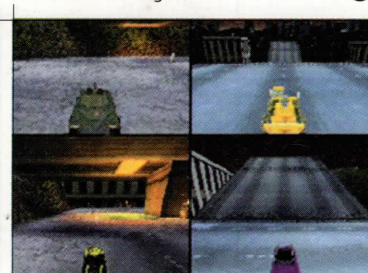
There are a variety of different missions set in environments ranging from desert to alpine landscapes. **S**



TITLE: TWISTED METAL 3
PUBLISHER: SONY
RELEASE: MARCH '99

Despite the fact that original creators, SingleTrac have moved on, the Twisted Metal license still remains in the possession of Sony. Therefore, I guess it was inevitable that it would not be long before we saw Twisted Metal 3 rear its metallic head.

Delivering more of the same on and off road racing and blasting, all the original cast return to do what they do best; blow stuff up. Twisted Metal 3 also benefits from a four-player split-screen mode, 12 vehicles and an enhanced 3D engine. **S**



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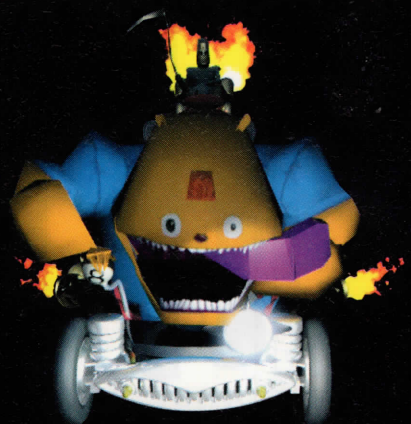
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PLUS MANY MORE!



INFO STATION

PocketStation launch details

Sony PSX add-on the PocketStation will be released in Japan on December 23rd for 2,000 yen which is roughly £15. To help promote the product Sony have approached all major developers, asking them when possible to make their games, compatible with the unit.

WWF goes to THQ

Having lost their lucrative WCW license to EA Sports, THQ have successfully acquired the rights to produce officially endorsed World Wrestling Federation titles. Which after the massive success of Acclaim's WWF: Warzone seems rather a good idea.

Namco unveil JogCon

To coincide with the release of R4, Namco are releasing a new peripheral – the JogCon. This unusual pad provides analog control using a large dial that acts as a miniature steering wheel. The JogCon will also feature force feedback.

TECH BITS G-CON AV ADAPTOR

PRODUCED BY: Blaze

PRICE: £6.99

RATING: Practical

A must for those Time Crisis owners with the new model PlayStations. Finally giving them the ability to actually use their big plastic shooter. Another benefit is that the adaptor enables the user to link the PSX to their stereo.



ANALOG STATION SHOCK 2

PRODUCED BY: Guillemot

PRICE: £14.99

RATING: Good

This rather impressive pad is compatible with dual shock, analog and Namco's NegCon games. Sadly the dire D-Pad lets the side down a tad. As third party pads go this is certainly worth picking up.



TEKKEN 3 CHEAT MASTER

PRODUCED BY: Blaze

PRICE: £9.99

RATING: Poor

Blaze take a memory card and fill it to the brim with saved data from various fighting games currently doing the rounds, including Tekken 3, obviously. Sorry but this takes all of the fun out of it. For sad cheats only.



RS STEERING WHEEL

PRODUCED BY: Act Labs

PRICE: £49.99

RATING: Great

Possibly one of the best steering wheels around, simply because it looks so damn cool. This very responsive wheel looks as if it has been lifted right out of an Aston Martin, complete with fake leather grip. Snob value is through the roof.



PSX DUAL FORCE STEERING WHEEL

PRODUCED BY: Gamester

PRICE: £59.99

RATING: Expensive

Take the basic Gamester steering wheel and add force feed back. The rumble sensation is surprisingly powerful but this is hard to recommend to those that already own a wheel.



Final Fantasy VIII set for '98 release

Japanese gamers will be pitching tents across the nation, as Square have announced that their eighth installment of the Final Fantasy saga will hit Japanese retail in December. Having been shown to great acclaim at this year's Tokyo Game Show, the news of an advancement in the release date has been welcomed.

Square's close links with Sony Japan may provide a clue to the hasty shipping of the title. With a mid-December release date, falling close to that of the release of Sega's much anticipated Dreamcast, the Japanese's fanaticism for the Fantasy series will undoubtedly offset important sales during Sega's make or break launch period.

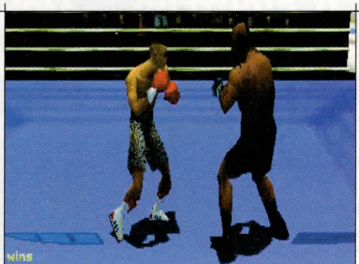
No official European release date has been announced as yet, but speculation points to a third quarter ship out.

PLAYSTATION 2 UPDATE

An insider at Sony Japan, has stated that the internal structure of their PlayStation offices has been divided between the promotion of the current PlayStation hardware and that of PlayStation 2. With an official unveiling planned at next year's Spring Tokyo Game Show, expect the hype to commence very soon.

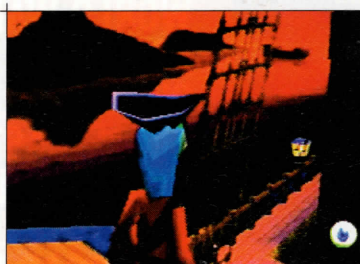
TITLE: PRINCE NASEEM BOXING
PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS
RELEASE: 2 QTR '99

Codemasters has just decided to climb into the boxing ring, with a little help from Prince Naseem. Codies unerring talent for signing up the biggest names in sport for each of its sports titles, has won this endorsement from the most bankable fighter in recent history. With just a killer game worthy of bearing his name, and its proven sports record means that Codemasters may at long last give fight fans a game worth donning their gloves for.



TITLE: GEX 4
PUBLISHER: EIDOS
RELEASE: 2 QTR '99

Crystal Dynamics' flagship character – Gex, returns for another bout of 3D platform shenanigans in Eidos' pending Gex 4. Carrying on where the third installment left off, our scaly friend once more finds himself channel hopping around a world where stars of TV and film become reality. Expect yet more in-jokes, improved visuals and some intriguing sub games when Gex makes his welcome returns to a console near you.



EYE CANDY

Happy Bloody Christmas!

Carmageddon is making its way onto the PlayStation in '99. Obviously we'll make sure that you get to read all about it first, here in STATION. In the meantime, here is a festive image that SCI have had specially made up for us.

Better pray that this guy won't be popping down your chimney on the 24th of December. **S**



Tits and Arse

The good, the bad and the plain old shite events that have respectively filled us with glee or pissed us right off, during the last four weeks.

The Tits

- Exclusive *Metal Gear Solid* Demo! What can we possibly say. A pure work of genius. Jon from Konami we salute you!
- Those delightful Japanese PR ladies that made much more than just the sun rise during our recent trip to Japan.
- 'After Shock', a drink made in Heaven, or quite possibly Hell.
- Kangaroo Poo and Psygnosis boys for delivering the compo goods.
- The Exorcist, for making us crap our pants all over again.
- Dwight York and Andy Cole for putting United back on track.
- Gianni Zamo, Mr BBFC, for all his help with our 'Thrill Killed' feature, we couldn't have done it without you.
- Fat Boy Slim, Unkle and of course the Beastie Boys for making those late night hours seem like minutes.
- South Park videos, bloody expensive but worth every penny.
- Jester, Codemasters and Rocket for bringing us the most original piece of PlayStation software ever – *Music*.

The Arse

- *Psybadek*, one of the biggest disappointments of the year.
- *Text Drive 4x4*. And these people ditched *Thrill Kill*!?
- Titanic. Own it first on video. Err why?
- England's dismal performance against Luxembourg and Sweden – sack Hoddle now please.
- *Crash Bandicoot: Warped* for halting anything that resembles work around the entire office.
- Import reviews of *Metal Gear Solid*, we'll wait for the PAL code thank you.
- Marlboro Lights. Nuff said.
- The crap weather and the dark evenings. Ain't winter just fab?
- Electronic Arts' PR department. Hello... anybody there?.
- Sleeping in the back seat of a VW Polo, it's a very long and painful story.

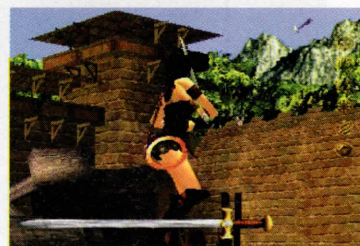
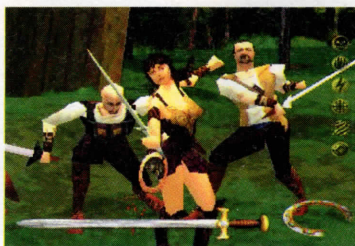
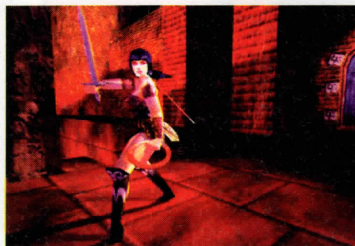


Xena enough of Lara?

TV's favourite arse-kicking babe,

Xena: Warrior Princess is due to star in her first PlayStation adventure, courtesy of Universal Interactive. Xena: Warrior Princess is a fast paced 3D third-person adventure that blends elements of sword and sorcery with the kind of epic action enjoyed by Eidos' famous tomb raiding bombshell – Lara Croft. Apart from the more obvious inspirations, the game also owes much to Activision's blood-fest *Tenchu*, with some mission scenarios requiring stealth in favour of all out death and destruction.


Made with complete co-operation from the producers of the series and its stars, including a full voice over by the lovely Lucy Lawless, we can only hope that as much attention to detail is paid to the gameplay itself. Xena makes her eagerly awaited debut early next year.



RAYMAN RETURNS

Although his first appearance upon the PlayStation was not dissimilar to masturbating with a piece of sand paper, mildly entertaining but quickly becoming far too painful to be fun, Ubi Soft's platform icon – Rayman, returns for yet another stab at gaming immortality. His second outing is thankfully showing far more promise than his woefully outdated original 2D ramblings.


Plunged into a free roaming 3D world, in line with the current genre trends, the annoying little fella has to deal with all the expected platform pitfalls on a mission to save his friends from imprisonment in an intergalactic zoo.

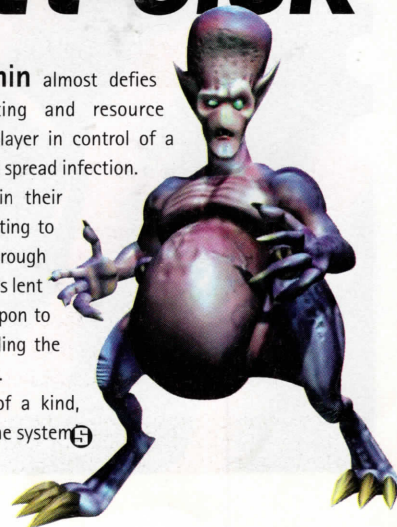
A recent dabble with some early code, has done much to help erase the unsavoury memories we once had for Rayman and any doubts we had about its imminent return. Thankfully, Rayman 2 looks to offer a welcome combination of stunning visuals and classic gameplay. 

Eidos get sick

Eidos' recently unveiled Vermin almost defies description. Equal parts, exploration, blasting and resource management, the resulting hybrid places the player in control of a parasitic lifeform who must enter a host body and spread infection.

Delivered with their tongue firmly placed in their collective cheek, Eidos' Vermin has the player opting to play as one of two vermin, chewing their way through the internal organs of a human subject. The game is lent a mission-style structure as the player is called upon to take over various parts of the body, whilst avoiding the minions of the evil Dr Cautious sent to stop them.

Bizarre but appealing, and definitely one of a kind, Vermin is coming, and it is set to be a shock to the system. 





EYE CANDY

Things That Go Bump In the Night

2 Eidos' recent acquisition of Crystal Dynamics snagged them the rights to one of the most promising games of the next 1999, *Soul Reaver: Legacy of Kain 2*.

This dark vampiric saga will not be unleashed upon the public until the second quarter but from what we've seen so far, the wait should be well worth it.

Until then, just remember if you hear someone or something breaking the cold silence of your Christmas morning, it might not be Santa bearing gifts. You have been warned.



Insider

The more serious face of the PlayStation marketplace...

Inside Index: [page 126] Dixons dedicated to software – Sony clampdown [page 127] Psygnosis office closure – EA make worldwide bid – Awards go annual – Metal Gear Solid warning

Dixons dedicated to software


With all the main high street videogame specialist predicting substantial growth for the future, Dixons is set to launch a new chain of specialist shops that will carry all its game software.

Electronics retail giant Dixons is set to launch a chain of stores, dedicated entirely to video games. The chain called @jakarta, will open its first two specialist stores before Christmas – one at the now infamous Lakeside shopping centre in Thurrock and another in the seaside town of Brighton. Two more stores are to follow shortly in the new year.

This trial run by Dixons follows predictions that videogame specialist chains *Game* and *Electronics Boutique* both predict a substantial growth for the future.

A spokeswoman for Dixons said it was confident that the new chain will not take from existing game outlets but, "Hopefully complement it and increase our market share".

Dixons is also planning for @jakarta to become a leading force in mail order and internet shopping with customers having free internet access to its new web service, Freeserve, which also plans to carry on-line gaming and a video games TV channel.

Shops will offer a wide range of PC and console titles and games-playing staff, offering customers the best, up to the minute advice and information possible. 

Sony clampdown on Third Party copycats

Third party peripherals manufacturers come under fire as Sony get tough on breaches of copyright concerning its own PlayStation controllers.

Sony Corporation, in bid to stop copycat designs of its own PlayStation controller unit, has issued several writs against peripheral companies X-Treme Europe Ltd and ED Games Ltd for alleged UK copyright infringements.


An out of court settlement has already been reached with X-Treme who have agreed to discontinue its offending controller range.

Sony is now looking at other companies products that it claims breach its UK copyrights. The products in question are Fire's

Blaze Basic joypads and Duo Rumble controllers and Joytech's Controller Plus and Analogue Controller Plus range.

Sony claims that these peripherals are too close to the official Sony PlayStation joypads. A source at Sony said, "Having spent millions on research, development and marketing, where we feel properties have been infringed we will take the necessary steps".

Sony are keen to point out that the move shouldn't be interpreted as a crackdown on third party accessory firms in general. A spokeswoman commented, "We do not object to competition and we are keen to support third party peripheral manufacturers. We will only clamp down on cases where we feel it is a take-off of our product. And maybe by taking action it will make companies think again. It could be considered as a warning".

Fire and Joytech have both decided to hand the case over to their solicitors. 



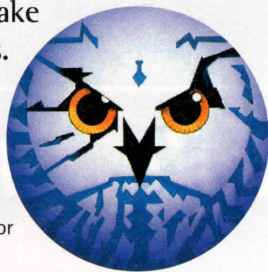
Psygnosis close Manchester office

Manchester office closes as Sony take down the 'for sale' sign from Psygnosis.

Psygnosis have announced the closure of it's Manchester development office, which will result in the loss of around seventy five jobs. Several projects have already been cancelled with the office expected to close upon completion the *Lander* project, which is due for an early 1999 release.

Psygnosis has stated that it will now concentrate on the Sony PlayStation although titles for other formats will still be pursued on a project by project basis.

The unexpected move, is a result of the rapid growth of the company over the last few years and the recent decision of Psygnosis' parent company, Sony, not to sell it as an ongoing concern. Managing director Gary Johnson said, "One consequence of this growth has been that our cost-base and our development spending have grown too large for the business to sustain. While difficult for those affected, we believe we have now taken the necessary steps to restore the company's fortunes and can look forward to a successful future for the company as a whole".



Development Awards go Annual

Talent searching, Games Developer UK awards a runaway success and hoped to boost female developers.

Due to the extremely positive reaction to the Games Developer UK Awards, it is now planned to make the talent searching ceremony into an annual event. Organised jointly by The Scottish Games Alliance, a group made up of Scottish game developers, and an economic development group called Scottish Enterprise, the event was aimed at finding development talent from outside the industry. However, it has proven to be far more popular than anticipated. A spokesman commented, "We received over 220 completed applications, but we had only expected nominations in the region of 25".

They also stated that future events would target female entrants as, 'ninety

five percent of applicants were male so attracting female talent is something we should definitely consider'. He also stated that they needed to keep an eye on industry developments but thought that there would be a boost to the profile of female developers in the coming years.

The winning entrants get dibs on a £10,000 prize fund and organisers are planning to donate Net Yaroze development kits to the winners' schools and colleges.

The event also has a number of secondary sponsors including Sony and Eidos. The categories for the contest included Best Computer Game, Best Computer Generated Artwork or Animation and Best UK Game Developer.



Electronic Arts bid for global domination

The time is right, says EA, to set up a subsidiary office in its Asia, to handle direct distribution of EA

Games giant, Electronic Arts is stepping up the search for new European development talent in Europe. EA also promises to open up a number of wholly owned development studios throughout the continent in the foreseeable future. Not satisfied with the recent purchase of Virgin, it is now on the look out for more flies to catch in its multi-national web.

Meanwhile, an October announcement stated that Electronic Arts has opened up its first mainland Asia office, which is to handle direct distribution of its products. Although

the Australian Office handles such business for Asia and the Pacific Rim, the new office in Seoul, South Korea is the first office set up in mainland Asia. In fact, EA believes that it is the first Western publisher to take this step.

CEO of Electronic Arts Asia Pacific, Nigel Sandford stated, "Korea is our largest market on mainland Asia and we feel the timing for establishing a subsidiary in Korea is ideal. The country is undergoing economic reform along international guidelines and the potential for growth is enormous". Something that EA obviously know a lot about.



Metal Gear Solid importers warned

UK grey importers get last minute warning regarding US and Japanese versions of Konami smash!

Konami, developer and publisher of *Metal Gear Solid* has warned off grey importers from obtaining American copies of the game through shady channels.

The game, released in the States late in October isn't released until the first quarter of 1999 in the UK, and Konami is threatening legal action to anyone caught importing or selling unofficial copies of the game.

Many retailers have already been offered grey imports from the States and the Japanese version of the game has been doing a steady trade in the UK ever since it's September release.



TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION
METAL GEAR
SOLID

Taking Control

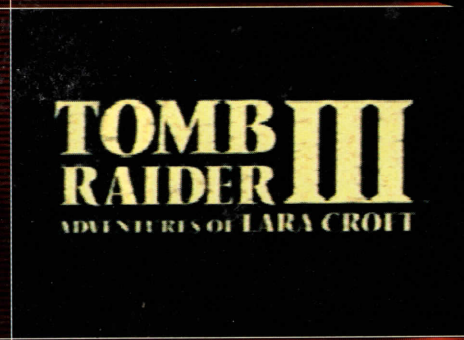
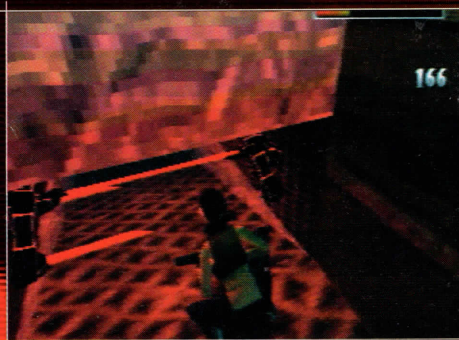
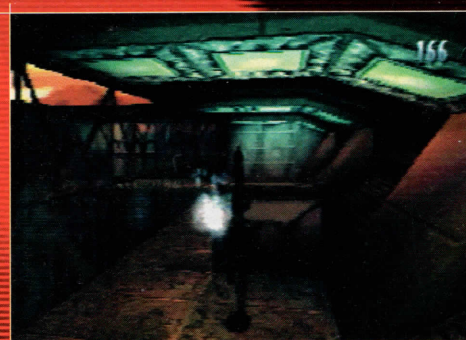
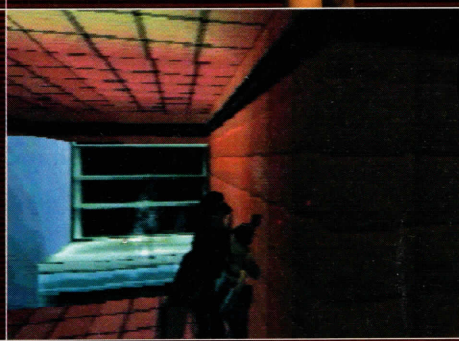
Tomb Raider III: Lara's Adventures

If you're a *Tomb Raider* veteran (and who isn't?), you should have absolutely no problem with getting to grips with this *Tomb Raider III* demo. The controls are basically the same as the last two games but just in case you haven't lost your cherry to the buxom Ms. Croft, here are those controls in full.

CONTROLS

↑	Run forward
↓	Jump back
←	Turn left
→	Turn right
(R)	Walk/side-step
(S)	Sprint when moving forward (S to dive)
(L)	Look
(C)	Crouch/crawl
(G)	Draw or holster weapon
(O)	Roll
(J)	Jump
(X)	Action/shoot with gun drawn
(SELECT)	Menu screen
(SELECT) + (R)	Draw flare

In analog mode use the left stick to move Lara around the playing area. Lara will either walk or run, depending on how hard you push the stick. The right analog stick can be used to look around.



**TOMB
RAIDER III**
ADVENTURES OF LARA CROFT

Game instructions. Pahl? Who needs 'em. Well, you do actually, if you're going to get the best out of this month's demos. Besides, five minutes spent here will save you hours trying to work the controls out for yourself, so what have you got to lose?...

Actua Soccer 3

The game we gave 90% to in issue 2 of STATION bursts exclusively onto our Demo CD. This is no two button arcade kick-about though, so study the controls carefully before you march through the tunnel and out onto the pitch.

CONTROLS

IN POSSESSION

- ⊙ Shoot
- △ Long pass (Hold for power)
- × Short pass (Hold & release-though ball)
- Speed burst (Tap and hold to knock ball forward)

OFF THE BALL

- × Standing tackle
- △ Sliding tackle
- Speed burst
- ⊙ Switch defender



Actua Golf 3

Put any preconceptions that you might have about golf games to the back of your mind, because Actua Golf 3 stands head and shoulders above the rest of the one button wonders that pass for golf games these days. Well it is if you have an analog pad. If you don't own one (and why not), you'll be missing out on the very essence of this superb sports sim.

CONTROLS

ANALOG

- Left Stick Swing club
- Right stick position club on ball
- D-Pad change shot direction
- △ Change view
- Camera
- Change clubs
- △ Draw/fade
- △ View hole/map
- △ Raise camera height
- △ Lower camera height

DIGITAL

- D-Pad Change direction
- × Hit ball
- △ Change view
- Camera
- Change clubs
- △ Draw/fade
- △ View hole/map
- △ Raise camera height
- △ Lower camera height

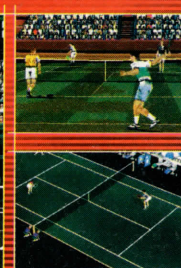


Actua Tennis

Tennis games aren't exactly the most popular genre on the PlayStation so any addition to the fold is a welcome one. Especially when it's a good one, which Actua Tennis most definitely is.

CONTROLS

- △ Lob
- Back spin
- × Flat shot
- Top spin
- △ Extreme shot
- △ View replay
- △ View scoreboard



CHARTS AND PRICE WATCH

Here's your essential guide to this month's movers and shakers in the PlayStation market. And don't forget, if you can hold on to a few extra pennies using our monthly Price Watch section, you just might be able to treat yourself to that extra game you wanted!

CHART TRACK		BLOCKBUSTER RENTAL	
1. TEKKEN 3	Sony	1. TEKKEN 3	Sony
2. TOCA TOURING CARS (PLAT.)	Codemasters	2. COLIN MCRAE RALLY	Codemasters
3. C+C RETALIATION	Virgin	3. SPYRO THE DRAGON	Sony
4. COLIN MCRAE RALLY	Codemasters	4. TOCA TOURING CARS (PLAT.)	Codemasters
5. GRAN TURISMO	Sony	5. GRAN TURISMO	Sony
6. ISS PRO '98	Konami	6. WORLD CUP '98	EA Sports
7. ABE'S ODDYSEE	GT/Platinum	7. TOMB RAIDER (PLAT.)	Eidos
8. V-RALLY (PLAT.)	Infogrammes	8. ABE'S ODDYSEE	Take2
9. TOMB RAIDER (PLAT.)	Eidos	9. RESIDENT EVIL 2	Virgin
10. TOMB RAIDER II	Eidos	10. WWF WARZONE	Acclaim

INDEPENDENT		GAME	
1. SPYRO THE DRAGON	Sony	1. SPYRO THE DRAGON	Sony
2. TEKKEN 3	Sony	2. DUKE NUKEM - TIME TO KILL	GT Interactive
3. COLIN MCRAE RALLY	Codemasters	3. VICTORY BOXING 2	Virgin Int.
4. GRAN TURISMO	Sony	4. TEKKEN 3	Sony
5. C+C RETALIATION	Virgin	5. MEDIEVIL	Sony
6. TOCA TOURING CARS (PLAT.)	Codemasters	6. ISS PRO '98	Konami
7. V-RALLY (PLAT.)	Infogrammes	7. COLIN MCRAE RALLY	Codemasters
8. TOMB RAIDER (PLAT.)	Eidos	8. PREMIER MANAGER 98	Gremlin
9. TOMB RAIDER II	Eidos	9. GRAN TURISMO	Sony
10. ABE'S ODDYSEE	GT/Platinum	10. NINJA	Eidos

PRICE WATCH	INDEPENDENT	GAMEPLAY MAIL ORDER	HMV	GAME
TEKKEN 3 - Sony	£39.99	£35.99	£44.99	£44.99
TOCA - Codemasters	£19.99	£17.99	£19.99	£19.97
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COLIN MCRAE RALLY - Codemasters	£34.99	£35.99	£39.99	£39.99

CONSUMER WATCH

Every month we go out onto the high street to talk to the country's gamers about their PlayStations and take a look at what they are buying now and find out which games they will be tracking down over the next few months.



NAME: Rob
AGE: 27
OCCUPATION: Independent Retailer
YOUR PURCHASE: ISS Pro
BUYING NEXT: FIFA '99
MOST WANTED: Tomb Raider III
BEST PSX TITLE YET: Tekken 3
WORST PSX TITLE: Actua Soccer



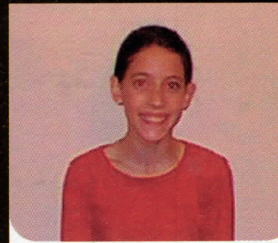
NAME: Sarah
AGE: 23
OCCUPATION: Office Receptionist
YOUR PURCHASE: Spyro the Dragon
BUYING NEXT: Errrr, dunno
MOST WANTED: Tomb Raider III
BEST PSX TITLE YET: Mario?????
WORST PSX TITLE: Crash Bandicoot



NAME: Dave
AGE: 44
OCCUPATION: Builder
YOUR PURCHASE: Tekken 3
BUYING NEXT: Tomb Raider III
MOST WANTED: Have to ask the kids
BEST PSX TITLE YET: No idea
WORST PSX TITLE: All of the them



NAME: Andrew
AGE: 8
OCCUPATION: School
YOUR PURCHASE: Sypro The Dragon
BUYING NEXT: TOCA Touring Cars
MOST WANTED: Crash Bandicoot 3
BEST PSX TITLE YET: G.T.A
WORST PSX TITLE: Spice World



NAME: Kelly
AGE: 11
OCCUPATION: Andrew's sister
YOUR PURCHASE: Sypro The Dragon
BUYING NEXT: Crash Bandicoot 3
MOST WANTED: Crash Bandicoot 3
BEST PSX TITLE YET: Spice World
WORST PSX TITLE: G.T.A

DISCLAIMER: PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL CHART PLACINGS AND PRICES FEATURED ON THIS PAGE WERE CORRECT AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRESS.

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